

OVERVIEW OF THE MACAO SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION IN 2022

The year 2022 was full of major challenges stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic. As Macao's economy faced unprecedented downward pressure, the MSAR Government swiftly activated an emergency plan, and launched two rounds of 10-billion-pataca community support measures to augment the financial relief measures launched in the first half of the year, striving to ease livelihood hardships, ensure employment and stabilise the economy. Also, in line with the Second Five-Year Plan and the plans outlined in the Policy Address, the MSAR Government pushed ahead with a variety of work in a practical way.

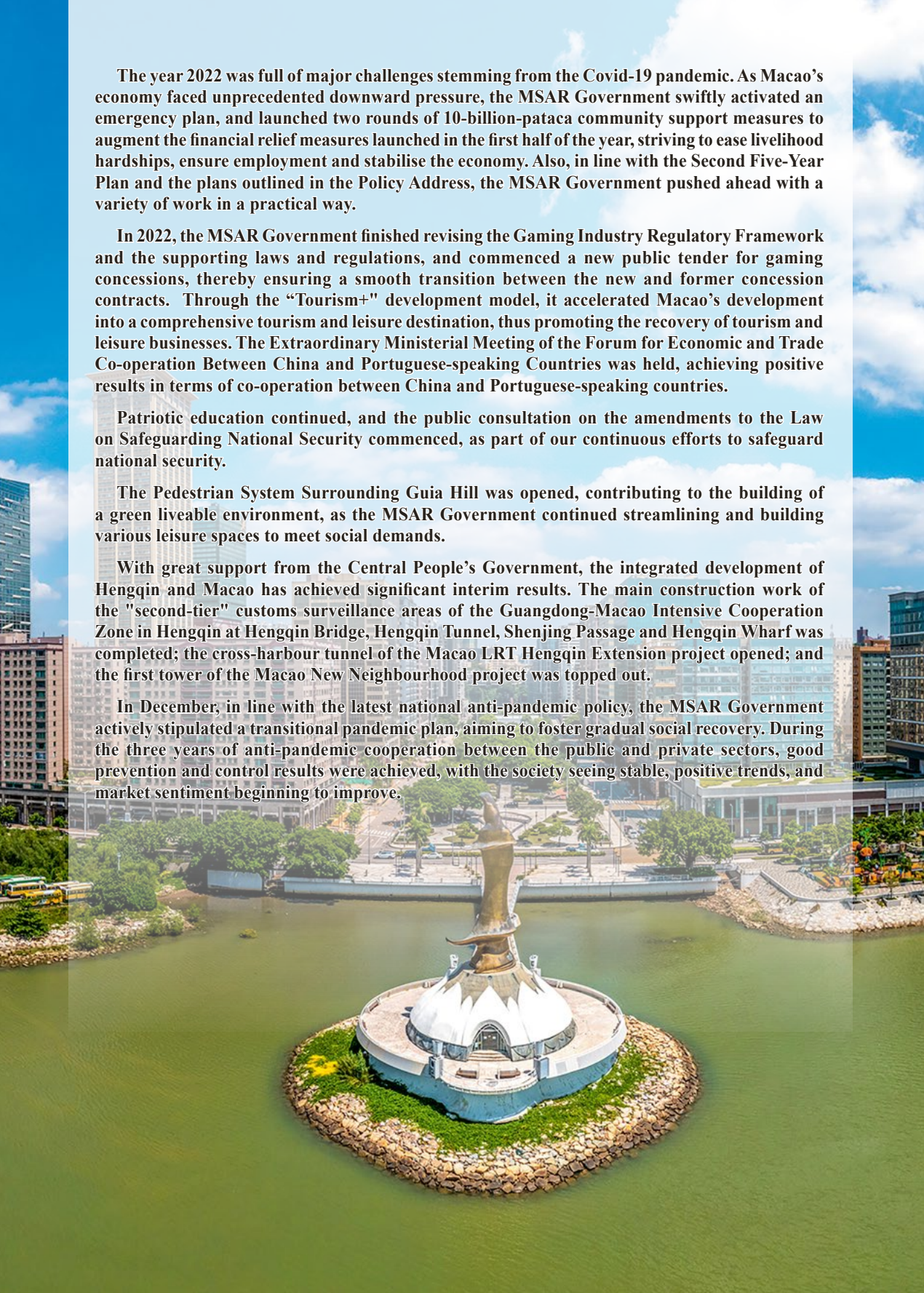
In 2022, the MSAR Government finished revising the Gaming Industry Regulatory Framework and the supporting laws and regulations, and commenced a new public tender for gaming concessions, thereby ensuring a smooth transition between the new and former concession contracts. Through the "Tourism+" development model, it accelerated Macao's development into a comprehensive tourism and leisure destination, thus promoting the recovery of tourism and leisure businesses. The Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Forum for Economic and Trade Co-operation Between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries was held, achieving positive results in terms of co-operation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries.

Patriotic education continued, and the public consultation on the amendments to the Law on Safeguarding National Security commenced, as part of our continuous efforts to safeguard national security.

The Pedestrian System Surrounding Guia Hill was opened, contributing to the building of a green liveable environment, as the MSAR Government continued streamlining and building various leisure spaces to meet social demands.

With great support from the Central People's Government, the integrated development of Hengqin and Macao has achieved significant interim results. The main construction work of the "second-tier" customs surveillance areas of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin at Hengqin Bridge, Hengqin Tunnel, Shenjing Passage and Hengqin Wharf was completed; the cross-harbour tunnel of the Macao LRT Hengqin Extension project opened; and the first tower of the Macao New Neighbourhood project was topped out.

In December, in line with the latest national anti-pandemic policy, the MSAR Government actively stipulated a transitional pandemic plan, aiming to foster gradual social recovery. During the three years of anti-pandemic cooperation between the public and private sectors, good prevention and control results were achieved, with the society seeing stable, positive trends, and market sentiment beginning to improve.



Pressing Ahead With Economic Diversification; Ushering in a New Phase in Leisure Tourism Development



Given the impact of the pandemic in neighbouring regions in 2022, as well as the local outbreak beginning on 18 June, Macao's macro economy faced unprecedented downward pressure, with major economic indicators showing a clear downturn. The annual gross domestic product (GDP) was 177.33 billion patacas, representing a contraction in real terms of 26.8 percent year on year, with a GDP per capita of 261,459 patacas. The local unemployment rate reached 4.8 percent, a new high in recent years.

Given the grim and complex situation, in addition to active prevention and control of Covid-19, the MSAR Government swiftly activated contingency plans and rolled out two rounds of "10-billion-pataca community support measures" building on the financial assistance measures launched in the first half of 2022, aiming to ease livelihood hardships, ensuring employment and stabilise the economy. Overall social development gradually stabilised, and the market atmosphere started improving.

10-billion-pataca financial relief to benefit the Macao community; multiple measures to ease livelihood hardships

The impact of the pandemic on Macao's economy has long been a major concern of the MSAR Government, which has implemented various measures in response. The financial relief measures

launched in the first half of 2022 included: early disbursement of the Wealth Partaking Scheme; refunding 60 percent of paid personal income tax for 2020 paid by Macao citizens, with a cap of 14,000 patacas; short-term food assistance for Macao citizens facing involuntary unemployment; the third round of the electronic consumer benefits plan; water and electricity fee subsidies for residential units and business enterprises in 2022; and a temporary allowance as an incentive to encourage employers to hire local job-seekers during the pandemic.

In response to the emergency arising from the Covid-19 outbreak beginning on 18 June, the MSAR Government swiftly launched a new round of financial assistance measures, budgeted at around 10 billion patacas. These included: property tax refunds for industrial or commercial activity venues; waiver of all tourism taxes; vehicle licence-plate tax refunds for commercial vehicles; waivers or refunds of permit and related fees; fuel subsidy for the taxi industry; launching a new round of the Employee, Freelancer and Business Subsidy Scheme; and launching a scheme to provide interest subsidies on bank loans for SMEs. Moreover, the measures allowing principal payment holidays for financial and commercial corporations were extended to 31 December, 2023.

On 15 July, the MSAR Government submitted a revised financial-year budget for the financial year to the Legislative Assembly for the second time, suggesting the use of an excess reserve of 35.157 billion patacas, which included an extra 10 billion patacas marked as expenses for anti-pandemic special plans, to cover various anti-pandemic expenses and provide public assistance to people stricken by the pandemic in Macao.

Stepping up support for businesses; optimising training to secure employment

The MSAR Government stepped up its financial support for the real economy, including by easing requirements for applying for the SME Assistance Programme, subsidising interest on bank loans for SMEs, extending the temporary measure to adjust the repayment periods for various assistance schemes, calling for financial institutions to extend the transaction fee exemptions for Simple Pay, and encouraging banks to increase credit facilities and adjust repayment plans for SMEs – effectively relieving the pressures on enterprises' liquidity.

The Government continued perfecting the subsidised training scheme, strengthening employment referrals and support for local residents. Throughout 2022, various online and offline job matching services helped 6,288 local citizens to secure jobs. The Government also encouraged employers to hire local employees by granting six-month temporary allowances to eligible employers that hired local employees. Regarding active support for local youth employment, the Government continued implementing the “Internship Plan to Create Better Job Prospects”, which offered 1,780 internship vacancies. By the end of 2022, a total of 342 people joined internships, 101 of whom were employed after completing their internships. The number of non-local workers was also controlled, to ensure employment priority for local employees. The Government continued expanding investment in public projects, with an annual investment and development budget of around 18.5 billion patacas to launch public works of various scales. Public projects totalled 50, costing over 100 million patacas.

Development of integrated tourism expedited; gaming industry fostered in accordance with the law

The adequate economic diversification of Macao is the top priority of the current Government administration. While fostering the recovery of the integrated tourism and leisure industry, we also accelerated the establishment of Macao as a comprehensive tourism and leisure destination through the “Tourism Plus” development model, which includes gastronomy, vacations, sightseeing, shopping, entertainment, culture, healthcare and sports, thereby enriching the content of Macao as a world tourism and leisure centre. During the year, the Government organised a variety of tourism activities to promote Macao’s image as a diverse tourism destination. It also collaborated with major online travel platforms to launch multi-destination thematic tourism products, and build a tourism brand for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

In 2022, the MSAR Government completed the amendments to the Gaming Industry Regulatory Framework and related regulations, in accordance with Macao’s positioning as “One Centre, One Platform, One Base” and in favour of fostering healthy, lawful and orderly development of the gaming industry; and commenced a new public tender for gaming concessions, to ensure smooth transitions between the new and former concession contracts.

On 14 January, the MSAR Government announced the draft amendment to the Gaming Industry Regulatory Framework and related regulations, stipulating the maximum number of gaming concessions as six, prohibiting the transfer of concessions, and limiting each concession period to no longer than ten years. The draft bill also lays down the approval criteria for casinos, gaming machines and gaming tables; enhances the reviews of qualification and supervision of gaming operators and companies; increases the capital required by gaming concessionaires to five billion patacas; and sets a transition period of three years for casinos located in properties owned by non-concessionaires. On 13 May, a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly made significant revisions to the draft amendment, including removing the requirement that satellite casinos must be set up in properties owned by concessionaires. On 21 June, the new Gaming Law passed its second reading in the Legislative Assembly; it came into effect on 23 June.

On 29 July, the MSAR Government launched a new public tender for gaming concessions, which closed on 14 September, and received tenders from seven companies. On 16 September, the Committee for Public Tendering of Gaming Concessions carried out the opening of tenders, and all seven companies were accepted as bidders. On 26 November, the preliminary results were announced, with winning bids from MGM Grand Paradise, Galaxy Casino Company (Galaxy), Venetian Macau, S.A., Melco Resorts (Macau) S.A., Wynn Resorts (Macau), S.A., and SJM Resorts, S.A. On 16 December, the Macao SAR Gazette published an Executive Order announcing the final results of the public tender for gaming concessions. On behalf of the MSAR Government, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng signed concession agreements with six concessionaires. The new concession agreements are valid for ten years, effective from 1 January, 2023. With the successful conclusion of the tender process, Macao’s gaming and tourism industries entered a new phase of development.

The amendments to the laws regulating the gaming industry and the public tender for the new gaming concessions aimed to achieve reform from the bottom up; promote long-term healthy, orderly,

and sustainable development of Macao's gaming industry; explore new tourist sources worldwide; and gradually enrich non-gaming elements – including conventions and exhibitions, entertainment performances, sports events, culture and art, healthcare and health maintenance, themed amusement facilities, city of gastronomy, community tourism and maritime tourism.

Fostering steady development of financial services and medical industries; accelerating development of the convention and exhibition industry



Regarding industrial diversification, the “Big Health” industry with Chinese traditional medicine research and development as the entry point saw steady development. After the plaque of the Macau Institute for Translational Medicine and Innovation was unveiled, translational medical science projects covering Chinese traditional medicine and biomedicine became the major focus in the initial stage, with key projects supporting the development of the Chinese traditional medicine industry – especially the practical application of the research results of the State Key Laboratory of Quality Research in Chinese Medicine, and relevant research results of other institutes of the University of Macau. The Pharmaceutical Supervision and Administration Bureau was established, and enforced the Law on Pharmaceutical Activities in the Field of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the Registration of Traditional Chinese Medicines, and perfected the procedures for approving industrial licences for manufacturing “Big Health” products, Chinese medicine, and technology products. The Government leveraged the advantages of favourable policies, such as CEPA, to assist Macao’s “Big Health” industry with exporting products to mainland China and overseas.

Also during the year, the modern financial services industry was steadily developing, and the foundation for development of the bond market was well established. The Macao Central Securities Depository (CSD) commenced operation, and from January 2022, local bonds issued in Macao could be allocated and maintain their International Securities Identification Numbers (ISINs), increasing the efficiency of issuing bonds. The Government also introduced the Guidelines on Management and Operation of Private Investment Funds, to lay a foundation for the introduction of various private investment funds.

The Government accelerated the fostering of high technology industries, encouraging cooperation between tertiary institutions and enterprises in industrial, academic and research development – resulting in a number of collaborative projects on integrated circuit design, cyber security and artificial intelligence. To foster online matching in industrial, academic and research development, the Government launched a funding scheme for industry-academia-research partnerships for enterprises. The Government also optimised the one-stop service workflows for investors, and actively attracted technology enterprises to establish their bases in Macao. The preparations for accreditation of technology enterprises have commenced.

To support the exhibition, convention, commerce and trade industries to seek new development models, the Government deepened its efforts to invite businesses, by organising conferences and exhibitions. Utilising the principle of “pre-exhibition positioning, in-exhibition follow-up, and post-exhibition tracking”, the Government helps merchants participating in conventions and exhibitions to fully understand Macao’s business advantages, helps them set up their bases or expand businesses in Macao, and demonstrates the momentum of “Industry + Conventions”. Leveraging the convention and exhibition platforms offering meeting and negotiation opportunities for local SMEs, a host of activities were held in Macao during 2022, covering medicine and health, information technology, commerce, trade and management, and involving over 200 business matching sessions.

Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of Forum Macao successfully held; China-Portuguese-speaking countries cooperation achieves positive results

The Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries (the Forum) – hosted by the Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China, organised by the MSAR Government, and co-organised by the Permanent Secretariat to the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries – was successfully held on 10 April, 2022. The meeting was held in online plus offline formats in both Beijing and Macao, with the main venue located at Macao’s Complex of the Commerce and Trade Co-operation Platform for China and Portuguese-speaking Countries.

At the opening ceremony, the Premier of the State Council, Li Keqiang, delivered a speech via video, in which he recognised the Forum’s significant results; gave recommendations on ways to deepen the relationship between China and Portuguese-speaking countries; and called for all countries to safeguard peace and stability, foster development and prosperity, reinforce solidarity and cooperation, achieve an early victory in the battle against the pandemic, commit to opening up to cooperation, and promote economic recovery. Eight senior officials of Portuguese-speaking countries fully recognised the Forum’s important functions and positive achievements, gave

valuable advice on the Forum's development, and expressed high hopes for further expansion and deepening of the cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries under the Forum's framework.



Following the opening ceremony, the plaque-unveiling ceremony for the China-Portuguese-speaking Countries Epidemic Prevention Exchange Centre was held. The exchange centre was established to fully demonstrate the advantages of Macao's close relationships with Portuguese-speaking countries, and enhance cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries in medicine and health via various forms of exchanges and training, with a view to raising mutual anti-pandemic capabilities, jointly promoting the development of global public health industry, and ultimately building a community aiming for health for all.

During the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting, the Chinese Minister of Commerce, Wang Wentao, and ministers from Portuguese-speaking countries delivered speeches about stronger exchanges regarding pandemic prevention as well as mutual efforts to foster post-pandemic economic recovery among China and Portuguese-speaking countries. All parties agreed to enhance dialogue on anti-pandemic cooperation and post-pandemic economic recovery, help each other to win the battle against Covid-19, and promote mutual prosperity. All parties also hoped to strengthen Macao's important role as a platform for anti-pandemic cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking countries. Following the conference, the attending ministers signed the joint declaration of the Special Ministerial Conference, and officially included the Republic of Equatorial Guinea as the tenth country participating in the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries.

Actively Responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic and Gradually Returning to Normal Life



As the Covid-19 pandemic entered its third year, we were also faced with the emergence of new variants of the virus. The SAR Government has been adhering to the principle of putting the health and safety of citizens first, keeping in line with the country's overall prevention and control strategy and guidelines, and striving to cope with the pandemic, while adjusting measures according to the changing pandemic situation, gradually restoring normal functioning of society.

Dedicated community testing for infections and striving to maintain normal functioning of society

In 2022, the Government persisted with the general strategy of “preventing imported cases and a rebound of the pandemic in Macao” and the general principle of “dynamic zero-infection”, continuously strengthening its preventive measures in response to changes in the pandemic situation. On 18 June, the Health Bureau was notified that a test of ten samples mixed together yielded a positive result for Covid-19. After re-examination, it was confirmed that one of the subjects again tested positive.

This was the first positive case in Macao since the outbreak in the autumn of 2021. Subsequently, more local infections were detected through nucleic acid testing in key population groups, key regions and citywide. Omicron BA.5.1, the variant of the virus that caused the outbreak, is highly contagious, spreads quickly and has a short incubation period. The Government immediately

launched the response mechanism and activated region-specific, multi-level prevention and control in accordance with the contingency plan. Under the command of the Chief Executive, the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre (the Coordination Centre) and the Civil Protection Action Centre worked together to implement various measures to stop an explosive surge in the pandemic.

On 18 June, the Coordination Centre announced that all Macao citizens and people staying in Macao must participate in citywide nucleic acid testing from 12 noon on 19 June to 12 noon on 21 June. At the same time, nucleic acid testing of key population groups (security, cleaning and property management workers) and key areas was carried out, rapid antigen testing was introduced, KN95 masks were distributed, and measures were implemented to reduce the movement and gathering of people, to prevent community transmission of the virus.

Subsequently, two more citywide nucleic acid tests were conducted, until 3 July, and the number of new cases per day decreased from 96 on 26 June to 68 on 3 July. Hence, an explosive surge in the pandemic was successfully prevented.

With the care from the Central Government, the coordination of the State Council's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office and the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government, as well as the support of Guangdong Province Government and Zhuhai Municipality Government, 650 swab takers were sent to Macao to assist in nucleic acid testing. After reviewing and optimising the nucleic acid testing process, the Government conducted one round of citywide nucleic acid testing for key population groups every two days from 4 July to 10 July. The number of mixed samples testing positive continued dropping, from 94 in the fourth round to 23 in the sixth round. The number of new cases per day reached 146 on 5 July, then gradually decreased to 59 on 10 July.

Implementing relatively static management to effectively block community infection

On 10 July, in accordance with the provisions of the Law on the Prevention of Infectious Diseases, the Chief Executive, Mr Ho Iat Seng, issued an executive order stating that all non-essential industrial and commercial companies and premises, except those required for public services and people's daily necessities, would suspend operations for a week, from midnight on 11 July, with Macao thus entering a "static management" period. The suspension was later extended to 22 July. During this period, rapid antigen testing, citywide nucleic acid testing once every two days and nucleic acid testing of key population groups once a day, as well as nucleic acid testing in key regions, continued being conducted in order to break the chain of community transmission of the virus.

During the period of "static management", with the concerted efforts of the authorities, community groups and residents, the daily number of new cases dropped significantly, and cases in the community first returned to zero on 21 July. With just one community case on 22 July, the Response and Coordination Centre announced a trial "consolidation period" from 23 July, to gradually resume essential social operations. Moreover, based on the different risk levels of various population groups, it set different frequencies for nucleic acid testing, to identify potential sources of infection in the community as quickly as possible.

After the 14th round of city-wide nucleic acid testing yielded all negative results, Macao entered a six-day “stabilisation period” from midnight on 2 August. Rapid antigen testing was no longer required prior to nucleic acid testing. Nucleic acid testing was carried out once a day for key population groups, and once every three days for people working away from home. Subsequently, Macao resumed normalisation of epidemic prevention, returning to the same situation as prior to the outbreak on 18 June.



During the “618” outbreak, more than 11.8 million test samples were taken in 14 rounds of citywide nucleic acid testing and multiple rounds of nucleic acid testing in key regions and population groups. The Government continued improving the related arrangements, including by increasing the number of testing stations from 53 to 75, increasing the number of sampling booths, adding mobile sampling vehicles and opening more outdoor testing stations, and opening special care stations earlier in the day, to increase convenience for citizens. The time to complete each round of nucleic acid sampling was shortened from 48 hours to 28 hours. Also, there were more than 21.8 million self-reported results of rapid antigen testing. During the period, 88 red code areas and 301 yellow code areas were set up, and staff and volunteers were mobilised to meet the basic living needs of residents in these.

During the pandemic, the regional joint prevention and control mechanism once again played an important role. The Government maintained close contacts with Guangdong and Zhuhai, continuously exchanged pandemic information, discussed pandemic prevention and control arrangements, and coordinated customs clearance arrangements for imported fresh foods, anti-pandemic supplies and essential personnel.

Returning to normal life in accordance with the country's prevention and control policy

On 8 December, the Government announced that the prevention and control of the pandemic in Macao entered a “transitional period”, in accordance with the country's policy of optimising epidemic prevention and control. The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Ms Ao Ieong U, pointed out that many challenges had arisen since the outbreak of the pandemic three years ago, and the Government had made every effort to protect the general public. Thanks to the joint efforts of all Macao residents, the number of Covid-19 cases in Macao was relatively low, and there had been six deaths. As the Omicron virus strain that spread all over the world became more and more contagious, it became easier to recover from the disease after infection, and as Macao's vaccination rate stood at over 90 percent, the conditions were ready for Macao to adjust the pandemic prevention measures.

Ms Ao Ieong U pointed out that although more than 50 percent of those infected with the Omicron strain were asymptomatic, there was still a significant number of people suffering mild symptoms and the virus was highly transmissible. A relatively large number of people were expected to be infected in the short term, and there would be some cases of severe or critical illness or even death. To avoid increasing the medical burden, Macao residents were urged to take the first line of responsibility for their own health and to protect themselves and those around them, while the elderly should be vaccinated as soon as possible to obtain early protection so they could open a fresh chapter in their lives.

Ms Ao Ieong U also revealed that the Government had been actively preparing for two months to formulate a transitional response plan for the prevention and control of the pandemic, to prepare for the implementation of various measures after making appropriate adjustments subsequent to the country's announcement of new policies. According to the plan, all departments had implemented the management of essential supplies, system configuration, set-up of venues, personnel training and other work.

On 9 December, the Macao SAR cancelled nucleic acid testing on arrival, as well as nucleic acid testing and rapid antigen testing for incoming visitors. On 10 December, the Response and Coordination Centre updated the pandemic control guidelines. Venues not belonging to four key types could decide whether the presentation of a health code would be necessary for entry. Infected persons were allowed to be quarantined at home, with their health codes changed to red. Also, only “residential units” with infected cases would be classified as red code areas. A whole building would be classified as a yellow code area only when more than 10% of its residential units presented infected cases over five consecutive days, and the colour code would be lifted after no new infected case was found for five consecutive days.

A series of measures also included: phased distribution of anti-pandemic kits to all Macao residents, free medication and pandemic prevention materials for people of different ages, and the release of medication guidelines and videos; introduction of home isolation guidelines for close contacts; opening of community clinics for infected persons; and gradually reducing the requirement for nucleic acid testing and transitioning to simple rapid antigen testing.

The testing requirements for people entering Macao from mainland China were to be gradually

relaxed, and the entry control measures for people from outside mainland China, including those from foreign countries, Hong Kong and Taiwan, were to be adjusted according to the latest national policy.

After entering the transitional period of pandemic prevention and control, Macao saw a large number of Covid-19 infections. The SAR government implemented a tiered management system for infected persons, as planned. Through the Platform for Self-assessment and Community Outpatient Appointment for Covid-19 Patients, patients were triaged in order to determine if their cases were suitable for home isolation, community outpatient clinics via booking, community treatment centres, or special emergency care at Conde S. Januário Hospital by ambulance transfer. The Government also set up a western medicine telephone consultation service, to provide appropriate treatment for infected patients with various levels of medical needs. A total of 60 “Support Hotlines for Infected Persons” were set up, to respond to enquiries from infected persons or their families regarding various measures. The hotline was put into operation at 9am on 14 December. By midnight on 31 December, it had received 37,843 calls.

Authorities and residents have cooperated to fight the pandemic for three years to achieve better prevention and control

During the past three years of Covid-19 prevention and control, the Health Bureau has achieved good results in the prevention and control work, and continued making every effort to promote Covid-19 vaccination. By 31 December, 2022, a total of 1.79 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine had been administered, about 677,000 people had been vaccinated, 38,000 of whom had received only the first dose, 246,000 had received the second dose, 314,000 had received the third dose and 78,000 had received the fourth dose.

As for the treatment of infected people, a variety of drugs for the treatment of Covid-19 have been introduced and stockpiled; and the application of traditional Chinese medicine has been employed with reference to experience in mainland China, to improve the efficacy of treatment. From 1 January 2020 to 31 December, 2022, there were 2,501 confirmed cases, with 2,207 people discharged from hospital and 45 deaths.

In addition to vaccinations, and treating infected patients, the Health Bureau undertook a number of key prevention and control efforts, including:

- Maintaining the operation of isolation treatment facilities at the Public Health Clinical Centre and the Conde S. Januário Hospital, and providing additional temporary isolation treatment facilities such as hotels with treatment in isolation, rehabilitation centres and inpatient areas of community treatment centres, in accordance with the development of the pandemic, providing a total of about 6,400 beds;
- Launching a program to supply masks to Macao residents, to ensure the daily use of masks by everyone. As of 31 December 2022, about 240 million masks had been sold;
- Risk-based assessment of people entering from different regions. Introducing an electronic health reporting and health declaration system, implementing quarantine measures such as temperature screening and medical observation at borders, and adjusting entry policies according to the situation;

- The Health Code mobile application was launched in late November 2021, adding a “travel log” function to improve the efficiency of epidemiological surveys. By the end of 2022, about 1.057 million people had registered for the Health Code mobile app, and 480 million applications for the Macao Health Code through the app were processed;
- Carrying out nucleic acid testing and cooperating with third-party institutions to gradually improve testing capacity. By the end of 2022, a total of 35.64 million samples had been tested;
- In April 2022, the anti-pandemic Chinese medicine team was established. During the “618” pandemic, for the first time, a combination of Chinese and Western medicine was used to treat more than 1,350 infected persons (about 74% of all infected persons) who agreed to this treatment and more than 110 persons accompanying them; in total about 1,500 persons were provided with traditional Chinese medicines including Lianhua Qingwen capsules and Huoxiang Zhengqi soft capsules/oral liquid. Among 408 infected persons who were foreign nationals, 268 were treated with traditional Chinese medicine, representing 67 percent of this total.

A New Horizon for Macao-Hengqin Integration, with Comprehensive Developments in Full Swing



Over a year since its establishment, the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin (Cooperation Zone) has got off to a good start with the support of the Central People’s Government. Operating within the new system of mutual discussions, joint construction, joint administration, and shared benefits, Guangdong and Macao have joined hands to foster the construction of the Cooperation Zone with the “general theme” – focusing on industrial development, integration of people’s livelihoods, and alignment of rules and regulations, with significant milestones achieved

in Macao-Hengqin integrated development.

With the solid start of the Cooperation Zone development, Guangdong and Macao have jointly coordinated the phased implementation of various objectives.

As the construction of a new system for the integrated development of Macao and Hengqin gained speed, an effective alignment of the two regions' systems became integral to both the long-term development of the Cooperation Zone and the adequate diversification of Macao's economy. The Cooperation Zone has set up a task force on policy research and alignment of rules and regulations, and has maintained close communications with related state authorities, to foster the implementation of key facilitative policies under the Master Plan for the Development of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

The preferential policies on business income tax and personal income tax ("Double 15 percent" tax incentives) proposed in the Master Plan for the Development of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin comprise the first batch of tax policies implemented after the establishment of the Cooperation Zone, which are also key to attracting enterprises and talents. The master plan specifies that a reduced business income tax rate of 15 percent will be levied on eligible industrial enterprises in the Cooperation Zone, and for high-end and scarce talents working in the zone, the portion of personal income tax exceeding 15 percent of their tax burden will be exempted.

The implementation of the "Double 15 percent" tax incentives in 2022 has greatly enhanced the aspirations and confidence of market players, especially enterprises with funding from Macao, as they participate in the development of the Cooperation Zone; and has attracted high-end and scarce talents from home and abroad to the Cooperation Zone.

The master plan states the need to provide more convenience for Macao residents in terms of entrepreneurship, employment, education and livelihoods in the Cooperation Zone; along with fostering the orderly integration of public services in the Cooperation Zone with those in Macao, and the establishment of a new, open and high-quality social system that is integrated with Macao.

Since the establishment of the Cooperation Zone, Guangdong and Macao have implemented a single application process for business registrations in the Cooperation Zone and Macao, facilitated by cross-border services. Both Guangdong and Macao have set up service points in Macao and the Cooperation Zone, to provide business registration services for local investors, through which investors from Macao and mainland China can register businesses in the Cooperation Zone and Macao without leaving their home city.

In order to implement the relevant requirements of the Master Plan and further facilitate travel by Macao residents to and from Hengqin, the executive committee of the Cooperation Zone, in consultation with the Secretariat for Security of the MSAR Government, fully relaxed the quota for Macao's non-commercial light vehicles (with nine seats or less) entering or exiting Hengqin. This came into effect on 22 August 2022, cancelling the quota limit of 10,000.

By 15 September 2022, construction of the "second-tier" customs surveillance zones at Hengqin Bridge, the Hengqin Tunnel, the Shenjing Passage and the Hengqin Pier in the Cooperation Zone was completed. The successful completion of this project will facilitate the efficient, convenient and safe flow of various resources between the Cooperation Zone and Macao, which will in turn help drive the integration and greater opening up of Macao and Hengqin, and introduce new impetus

for Macao to better integrate into the overall development of the country and enrich the realisation of “One country, two systems”.

The Hengqin Extension of the Macao Light Rapid Transit (LRT) is a major project for the benefit of people’s livelihoods in Macao. The successful hole-through of the cross-harbour tunnel of the Macao LRT Hengqin Extension project on 25 November signified a breakthrough in the construction of Macao’s first cross-harbour tunnel by shield tunnelling. As an important link between Macao and the Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, the LRT Hengqin Line extension will create a comfortable and convenient cross-border travel environment for residents of the two places, and lay the foundation for the incorporation of Macao into the “one-hour living circle” of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

During the plenary meeting of the Legislative Assembly on 16 November 2022, in replying to enquiries on the Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2023, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng stated that since the establishment of the Cooperation Zone over a year ago, “eight significant growths” had been achieved – mainly in numbers of Macao invested enterprises, brick-and-mortar businesses, high-end manufacturing, and technology research and development enterprises; overall tax revenue; the population of Macao citizens; number of Macao motor vehicles with single licences; number of Macao residents benefiting from medical services in Hengqin; and number of Macao students studying in the Cooperation Zone.

According to 2022 figures, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Cooperation Zone reached 46.179 billion patacas during the year, with overall tax revenue of 35.389 billion patacas, representing a year-on-year increase of 13.2 percent. In addition, the number of enterprises with investments from Macao increased significantly – by 1,114, or 15.02 percent, since the establishment of the Cooperation Zone; there were 6,909 Macao residents living and working in the Cooperation Zone, 766 of whom had registered for employment in the Cooperation Zone, representing a year-on-year increase of 58.6 percent.

Since the establishment of the Cooperation Zone more than a year ago, nascent industries contributing to Macao’s adequate economic diversification have flourished. Statistics show that the value added of the financial services industry in the Cooperation Zone reached 16.4 billion yuan in 2022, representing growth of 8.1 percent from the previous year, and accounting for 35.5 percent of the region’s GDP – demonstrating that the modern financial services industry has assumed a major role in the industrial development of the Cooperation Zone.

There are currently about 700 financial services enterprises in the Cooperation Zone, covering sub-sectors such as banking and insurance, financial leasing, wealth management and many others. The overall financial services sector is relatively diverse and can meet the financial service needs of various enterprises. By the end of 2022, there were 22 Qualified Foreign Limited Partner system (QFLP) management enterprises in the Cooperation Zone, 13 of which were Macao-funded. The Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect Scheme has been operating smoothly, with the number of banks participating in the pilot scheme increasing to nine. As of the end of September 2022, the total amount of cross-border Reminbi settlement in the region exceeded 221.6 billion yuan, representing an increase of nearly 29 percent over the same period last year.

Regarding the promotion of technology industries: making integrated circuits is one of the

key industries in the Cooperation Zone, and the integrated circuit industry in Hengqin has been growing rapidly. The Guangdong-Macao Integrated Circuit (IC) Design Industrial Park in Hengqin has opened, with an occupancy rate of nearly 40 percent. Also, Traditional Chinese Medicine and Macao branded industries have seen steady development. With the improved management of the Traditional Chinese Medicine Science and Technology Industrial Park for Cooperation Between Guangdong and Macao (GMTCM Park), 229 enterprises were registered in the park, 59 of which were Macao enterprises, demonstrating the agglomeration effect of the industry.

Over the past year, since the establishment of the Cooperation Zone, the new neighbourhood for Macao residents to live and work in has a new look. China's first one-stop social security counter for Guangdong and Macao has become operational, offering Macao residents free access to 14 essential public health services, including medical check-ups for the elderly and treatment for chronic diseases. Macao students in the Cooperation Zone can enjoy Macao's education subsidies. The special cooperation between Guangdong and Macao on "One Examination, Multiple Accreditations" for vocational skills has officially commenced.

The Macao New Neighbourhood in Hengqin is an integrated community with housing, education, healthcare and social services. The topping out of the project's first tower was completed at the end of September 2022, with 4,000 residential units scheduled for sale in 2023. The overall planning and design of the project aim to create a living environment akin to Macao, providing Macao citizens with more convenience for studying, employment, entrepreneurship and livelihoods in Hengqin.

Optimising Municipal Facilities and Building a Green, Liveable Environment



The Macao Special Administrative Region Government strives to enhance the modernisation of urban governance, realise high-quality urban development, build multi-type and multi-level recreational areas, continue improving people's livelihoods and well-being, create a more liveable environment, and provide happier and more fulfilling lives for residents.

Facilitating improved commuting for the people

The Pedestrian System Surrounding Guia Hill – which includes a pedestrian tunnel, a pedestrian flyover, an elevator and a related equipment room – passes through Guia Hill and connects the area around Avenida de Horta e Costa and the surrounding crossings of NAPE District. It is a livelihood project that benefits the overall community. In 2022, this long-awaited project was officially opened on 1 October.

Among the facilities, the most notable is the Guia Hill pedestrian tunnel, which passes through Guia Hill from south to north, offering a new, convenient route for residents of New Port Area and Horta e Costa. The design and decorations integrate with nature, and use Macao's world cultural heritage as their theme, creating a comfortable walking space for busy city people.

Since its launch, the pedestrian system has improved the walking environment in the area. The walking distance between NAPE District and Avenida de Horta e Costa has been shortened from about 1,100 metres, around Guia Hill, to about 400 metres. The pedestrian tunnel is equipped with a pedestrian conveyor system, and is connected to a nearby elevator. The project has also optimised the surrounding pedestrian crossing environment, and has won the appreciation of the general public.

Optimising Leisure Space in Response to Demand

In tandem with societal development, residents' demand for children's leisure and play area is increasing. In recent years, many new and improved leisure areas and playgrounds have opened or reopened. Following projects such as the newly built Kun Iam Statue Waterfront Park Leisure Area and the optimised Camoes Garden, in 2022 the MSAR Government continued increasing and optimising residents' recreational spaces, and completed the construction and optimisation of several municipal facilities.

In order to make good use of land resources, the Municipal Affairs Bureau has used four idle plots on Avenida Marginal do Lam Mau to build a temporary leisure area. Built in phases, with a total area of 6,220 square metres, it integrates comprehensive sports, recreation and children's playground facilities, and optimises the walking route environment and greenery. The project has created a variety of recreational spaces for residents of Lam Mau Tong and Fai Chi Kei.

The Temporary Leisure Area on Avenida Marginal do Lam Mau includes leisure and recreational facilities such as a children's playground, a court for ball games, a comprehensive fitness area, a multi-function square, and a roller skating rink, providing a variety of activity choices for the public including young people. The comprehensive fitness area was the first of these facilities to open, in August 2021, and the children's playground and roller skating rink – covering an area of about 2,300 square metres – officially opened on 9 November, 2022. The children's playground introduced parent-child inclusive play equipment, and features the first outdoor sand pit on the Macao peninsula, creating an environment where children can interact, play and help each other,

and boost their creativity through fun with water and sand-building games. Since its opening, the children's playground has become very popular, and is now another top parent-child destination in Macao, after the Kun Iam Statue Waterfront Park Leisure Area.



In addition, the children's playground in Guia Recreation Square reopened on 5 March, after optimisation. The children's playgrounds in Zones A and B of the Reservatorio Park were reopened on 1 October and 15 December, respectively, after improvement works. This large-scale playground optimisation project has provided more recreational facilities suiting for the developmental needs of children of different ages, while increasing the joy of parent-child interactions, and optimising the green landscape and auxiliary facilities of the park, to truly meet residents' needs.

Promoting Environmental Protection and Sustainability

In 2022, the MSAR Government continued promoting the application of green energy. In addition to compiling the plan to promote electric vehicles in Macao, the subsidy scheme for replacing old motorcycles with new electric motorcycles was launched. Vehicle owners were encouraged to replace their old and highly polluting motorcycles with new electric motorcycles, to increase the electric motorcycle penetration rate, and further improve air quality and meet the carbon emissions target.

The subsidy scheme started accepting applications on 1 March, with a total maximum subsidy and fee waiver of 8,800 patacas. By the end of 2022, the scheme had received a total of 1,169 applications, and 828 old motorcycles had been handed in, resulting in 676 new electric motorcycles being registered. The scheme has led to a significant increase in the ratio of electric motorcycles in Macao, and promoted the introduction of more brands and models in the market, further increasing the penetration rate of electric motorcycles. The MSAR Government then extended the funding

application deadline to 31 March, 2023, to encourage more motorcycle owners to participate.

At the same time, the MSAR Government urged bus companies to replace old buses with new ones, and required all public entities to – ideally – replace existing combustion engine vehicles with electric vehicles, and ensure any further vehicles that are purchased are electric. All newly built government buildings and public housing must be equipped with charging facilities for electric vehicles. To support the use of electric vehicles, by December 2022, the MSAR Government had added more than 2,100 light vehicle charging stations and installed 500 electric motorcycle charging stations in 42 public parking lots, to respond to the demand for facilities supporting electric vehicles.

In order to further promote the policy on restricting use of plastic, the MSAR Government started to ban the import of non-degradable disposable plastic straws and drink stirrers from 1 January, 2022; it also further implemented energy conservation, pollutant reduction and environmental protection in multiple ways, aiming to build a green, liveable city.

Safeguarding National Security and Continuing to Develop Patriotic Education



National security is the cornerstone of protecting citizens' lives and properties. As such, the security of the MSAR relies on the fundamental protection of national security. To this end, the MSAR Government has always been committed to giving priority to the work of safeguarding national security and public safety.

Amending the Law on Safeguarding National Security to Keep Abreast of the Times

2022 saw worrying changes in the security situation worldwide and regionally, and with the recurring pandemic, Macao faced a number of security challenges. Since the enactment of Law No. 2/2009 – Law on Safeguarding National Security, the Macao SAR has fulfilled its obligation set out in Article 23 of the Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's

Republic of China, which has greatly facilitated the protection of national security and public order in Macao. However, to effectively tackle the complicated and volatile security risks, safeguard national security and the long-term stability of Macao and ensure stable and long-lasting implementation of the “One country, two systems” principle, the Law on Safeguarding National Security must be kept abreast of the times, to meet the latest needs and objective demands for safeguarding overall national security. Given these aims, the MSAR Government highlighted the amendment to the Law on Safeguarding National Security as one of the major legislative tasks, and commenced a public consultation on 22 August 2022, which lasted 45 days.

The amendment by the MSAR Government was introduced in line with the “Four Principles”, “Five Directions” and “Six Highlights”. The purpose of extensive public consultation was to ensure that the amended Law on Safeguarding National Security could take into account the need for national security crime prevention and protection of human rights, rectifying the problems and inadequacies of the existing law, to achieve parity in levels of safeguards afforded by the related laws of the country and the HKSAR, and enable the MSAR to implement the security law so it meets national standards, thereby upgrading Macao’s ability to coordinate and administer affairs related to the safeguarding of national security – effectively safeguarding the sovereignty, security and development interests of the country, as well as maintaining Macao’s prosperity and stability.

To widely gather opinions, the MSAR Government held a host of consultation sessions during the public consultation period, for Macao residents and sectors including political and legal, economy and finance, social and cultural, administration and judicial, and transport and public works. Relevant Government officials also exchanged views with the public on the consultation about the amendment to the law, through holding press conferences and presentations as well as taking part in radio and TV programmes. During the consultation period, the MSAR Government compiled a total of 111,049 views from 5,937 opinions and suggestions collected. According to the report with analyses and conclusions released on 7 November, 93.37% of the respondents agreed to the amendment, while 0.40% disagreed, indicating that the amendment was generally supported by the community.

After thoroughly studying and considering public opinions and suggestions collected during the consultation period, the MSAR Government introduced the Amendment to Law No. 22/2009 – Law on Safeguarding National Security to the Legislative Assembly on 2 December. The bill stipulates that “state secrets” would be regulated by special laws. To complement the legal amendment, the Government drafted the Law on Guarding State Secrets and submitted it to the Legislative Assembly for deliberation on 30 December, to ensure adequate and strict protection of state secrets.

Continuously Perfecting the System for Safeguarding National Security

The National Security Adviser and National Security Technical Advisers, all of whom were commissioned by the Committee for Safeguarding National Security, officially assumed their duties on 21 March 2022. The State Council appointed Fu Ziying, the Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government in the Macao Special Administrative Region, as the National Security Adviser, and Zheng Xincong, the Deputy Director of the Liaison Office, and Yin Shuhua, the minister of the Liaison Office, as National Security Technical Advisers.

At the first plenary meeting of 2022, held by the Committee for Safeguarding National Security of the Macao Special Administrative Region, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng said that in the face of a security environment that had become more serious and complicated overall since the end of 2021, in future the committee should follow the spirit of the central authorities and the important instructions as conveyed in the keynote speech by President Xi Jinping on 1 July 2021, and earlier speeches by other Central Government leaders and by the National Security Adviser. Taking the inauguration of the National Security Adviser and National Security Technical Advisers as a new starting point, the committee would make concerted efforts to consider the overall security issues of the country and Macao from a higher perspective and with a broader mindset and vision; deploy work in a more forward-looking and thorough manner; stringently conduct assessments; and promptly identify emerging security risks and efficiently resolve them; continue its work on security and development, and the coordination of conventional and non-conventional security work on the basis of the previously well-established foundation; and overcome the shortcomings and inadequacies in different areas of security, so that there are constant improvements and enhancements to the system for safeguarding national security, thereby enabling Macao to more effectively resist various security risks and threats against the country and the MSAR, maintain the stability of the country and Macao society, and strive for a more favourable security environment for economic recovery.

As cyber security is an important component of national security, the MSAR Government has actively aligned with the country's digital transformation, formulated a top-down policy on cyber security, and expedited improvements to the standard of cyber security construction in Macao. The Legal System for Interception and Protection of Communications came into effect on 1 August, to adapt to the development of information technology, better ensure public safety and provide better safeguards for the fundamental rights of Macao residents.

Strengthening a Sense of Recognition and Caring for the Motherland

The MSAR Government continued developing education on patriotism and national identity. The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was held from 16 October to 22 October in Beijing, and the MSAR Government proactively led all sectors of society to seriously learn and comprehend the essence of the 20th National Congress. On 1 December, the MSAR Government invited members of the publicity delegation of the Central Government to hold two seminars to promote the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the CPC in Macao. These attracted almost a thousand participants from various sectors, including principal Government officials, members of the Executive Council, the Legislative Assembly and the judiciary, Macao deputies to the National People's Congress and members of the National Committee of CPPCC, officials from various MSAR Government bureaus, and representatives from the business, professional, educational, media and youth sectors.

On 15 April 2022, the educational exhibition on national security opened, featuring texts, photos and videos to highlight that – led by the holistic approach to national security – the country has been able to coordinate development and security, calmly cope with profound changes and a pandemic unseen in a century, and make a series of great achievements in national security in the new era. The exhibition also featured the measures adopted by and achievements of the MSAR Government in safeguarding national security and promoting “One Country, Two Systems” in a steady manner.

The exhibition received an overwhelming response from all sectors of the community since its opening. The rich exhibition content attracted participation from the general public, as well as from community organisations, youth associations, schools, public departments and public and private institutions. By the closing of the exhibition on 15 May, over 58,000 visitors had attended the exhibition, reaching a new record high, and the related website had recorded over 380,000 page views, demonstrating the solid foundation of patriotism in Macao.

Government departments, schools and community groups have been proactively promoting a variety of activities to raise awareness of national security among Macao residents, especially young people, and strengthen their sense of identifying with and belonging to the motherland and Macao.

Diligent Fulfilment of Legislative Function; Supervision of the Budget and Public Finances



During the first session of the seventh Legislative Assembly (from 16 October, 2021 to 15 October, 2022), a total of 41 plenary meetings and 176 committee meetings were held, with 19 laws, one resolution and 14 simple-majority resolutions passed during the plenary meetings.

Legislative function:

In line with the administrative principles of e-governance and environmental protection, Law No. 19/2021 on amending Law No. 16/96/M – Vehicle Licence Tax, dated 12 August was passed, realising paperless tax logos and e-monitoring of vehicle licence tax payments. Law No. 20/2021 on amending Law No. 3/1999 – Publication and Format of Laws and Regulations was passed, changing the official means of publication of Macao SAR Gazette from printing to digital. Law No. 5/2022 – Submission of Legal Procedure Documents and Electronic Payment of Procedural Costs was passed, marking the dawn of digitisation of legal proceedings. Law No. 6/2022 – Electronic Display of Documents Necessary for Driving Vehicles was passed, providing more convenient

digital services to drivers.

To ensure transparency and effectiveness in communicating information for tax purposes, Law No. 1/2022 on amending Law No. 5/2017 – Legal System on Communicating Tax-related Information was passed, revising the requirements regarding information sharing on request and automatic sharing of financial account information, to further align with the latest international standards.

Regarding education and public hygiene, Law No. 2/2022 on amending Law No. 9/2006 – Fundamental Law on Non-tertiary Education, and Law No. 10/2017 – Tertiary Education System were passed, integrating the Higher Education Fund, Education Development Fund and Student Welfare Fund into an autonomous fund, thereby streamlining confirmation of legal persons and responsible entities in the educational sector, adjusting the applicability of the Academy of Public Security Forces for the tertiary education system, and waiving the financial restrictions regarding scientific research expenses for specific public tertiary institutions. Law No. 13/2022 on amending Law No. 5/2011 – Law on Smoking Prevention and Control was passed, stipulating a series of regulations on e-cigarette control to better safeguard public health. Moreover, Law No. 9/2022 on amending the list of infectious diseases as appendix to Law No. 2/2004 – Law on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Communicable Diseases was passed through emergency procedures, classifying Monkeypox as an infectious disease, to facilitate the use of appropriate prevention and control measures to prevent the import and spread of the disease.

As regards combating illegal activities and safeguarding public safety, Law No. 3/2022 on amending Law No. 3/2010 – Prohibition of Illegal Accommodation was passed, to enhance related supervision and increase protection for property owners, in view of the novel operating model of illegal guesthouses.

Law No. 12/2022 – Legal System on the Control of Hazardous Substances was passed, stipulating the overall system supervising and preventing potential major accidents arising from owning, manufacturing, selling, transporting, storing or using hazardous substances. Law No. 14/2022 – Legal System on Lifting Equipment Safety was passed, institutionalising and normalising the management of lifting equipment, introducing a repair and maintenance system, and clarifying the duties and responsibilities of various entities. Law No. 10/2022 – Legal System on Interception and Protection of Communications was passed, improving the covert telephone surveillance system in the criminal prosecution process, and introducing targeted protection and independent regulation.

In late July, in response to the pandemic and the new era of digitisation, the Legislative Assembly held its plenary meeting via video conferencing for the first time in history, and discussed and passed the bills amending the 2022 Government Budget and the list of infectious diseases as appendix to Law No. 2/2004 – Law on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Communicable Diseases. The bills were passed in support of the MSAR Government's swift implementation of financial assistance measures to ease livelihood hardships, as well as allowing the inclusion of Monkeypox in the official list of infectious diseases.

Lastly, in line with the launch of a public tender for casino concessions, the Legislative Assembly passed Law No. 7/2022 on amending Law No. 16/2001 – Gaming Industry Regulatory Framework, thereby refining the regulation of gaming operation scale, revising the number of concessions, and enhancing the various responsibilities of concessionaires.

All the above 13 laws were submitted by the Government.

Fulfilment of supervisory function:

In accordance with the authority conferred by the Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the Legislative Assembly performed its supervisory duties regarding the government budget and public finances. This included passing Law No. 17/2021 and Law No. 18/2021 to amend the 2021 Government Budget, passing Law No. 21/2021 – 2022 Government Budget (the Budget was amended via Law No. 4/2022 and Law No. 8/2022, to reflect a series of financial assistance measures implemented by the Government to support the public in response to the impact of the pandemic), deliberating on the Government's reports on implementing the 2020 Budget and on the Audit Report on the General Accounts 2020, and listening to and discussing the 2022 Policy Address delivered by the Chief Executive.

With regard to tax affairs, Law No. 11/2022 on amending Regulations on Tourism Tax was passed, to align with Law No. 8/2021 – Law on the Operation of Hotel Premises that was already in effect, by reorganising the list of hotels and catering venues in hotels covered by tax collection and administration, clearing defining the targets of tourist tax collection, and adjusting the scope of exemptions and tax classification.

Moreover, to enhance interactions between the administrative and legislative functions of the Legislative Assembly, Chief Executive's questions and answers sessions were held in April and August. The first session covered questions to the Chief Executive regarding public administration and issues of general public concern, including the new round of financial assistance measures, promotion of employment, tourism development, urban planning, development of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone, medicine and education. The second session focused on measures for public benefit, preparations for economic recovery, development of emergent industries, review of pandemic prevention and control, public housing planning and building, and public administration reform. Hence, the Legislative Assembly continued demonstrating its functions of communicating public demands and resolving issues about people's livelihoods.

To better fulfil its duty of listening to and collecting the opinions of legislators, the Government held a consultation meeting and a briefing meeting for legislators on the Legal System for Publicly-funded Corporations and the Macao Road Traffic and Transport Planning Study (2021-2030). To enhance mutual interactions and understanding between the administrative and legislative functions, during the legislative session, legislators visited by invitation the New Urban Zone Area A, to observe its development; and the fourth Macao-Taipa cross-harbour bridge, to witness progress with construction work. The legislators also paid an observation and research visit to Hengqin, to gain a deeper understanding of the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone.

During the legislative session, legislators gave 377 pre-agenda speeches, covering the safeguarding of national security, housing policy, public transportation, medicine and health, culture and education, employment protection, energy saving and environment protection, regional cooperation, pandemic prevention and control, and economic recovery. Moreover, legislators submitted totals of 756 written questions and 82 oral questions to the Government, and the Legislative Assembly held eight plenary meetings for these enquiries. Lastly, the Follow-up Committee for Land and Public Concession Affairs, the Follow-up Committee for Public Finance

Affairs and the Follow-up Committee for Public Administration Affairs actively followed up regarding and prepared five reports on the following important administrative matters: planning and construction related to disaster prevention and reduction; interim report on implementation of the 2021 Government Budget; report on implementation of the 2Q21 and 3Q21 Investment Plan Budgets; report on implementation of the 4Q21 Investment Plan Budget; progress with construction of the new prison, and its construction expenses; report on implementation of the 1Q22 Investment Plan Budget; and seaworthiness of fishing boats and development of the fisheries industry.

It is the Legislative Assembly's responsibility to listen to and fully reflect different views, suggestions and criticisms from the public, and make prompt responses regarding public aspirations. During the legislative session, legislators received members of the public in-person through a duty roster system over seven person-times, and there were 155 cases of expression of opinions and suggestions via in-person visits, telephone calls or email by the public to the Legislative Assembly. Moreover, six petitions were presented to the Legislative Assembly by local residents or groups, and these were all appropriately handled by the Legislative Assembly, with due consideration of the facts.

Commission Against Corruption Practically Discharges its Duties while Commission of Audit Emphasises Sensible use of Public Funds



The Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) practically performed its duties in 2022. In terms of anti-corruption work, the CCAC actively carried out various investigations within limited timeframes, and solved several bribery cases. For the first time, the CCAC overcame problems regarding the different legal requirements of Hong Kong and Macao concerning bribery offences committed by private enterprises, and successfully joined forces with overseas counterparts to fight corruption across jurisdictional boundaries. The CCAC also solved vote-buying cases involving more than 200 voters, and cases involving violation of confidentiality in private enterprises. In

addition, cases related to various government subsidies were also investigated, to safeguard Macao's public interest.

As regards complaints to the Ombudsman, through its various monitoring methods, the CCAC achieved the objective of encouraging departments to reduce their problems and improve their systems. For cases arising from the arrangements to combat Covid-19 in 2022, the CCAC held meetings with the authorities and made feasible recommendations. Many cases involving delays in the approval of right of abode renewal or applications for acquisitions by the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute were also completed. Moreover, the CCAC promptly reviewed progress with follow-up work by departments or entities on the reinvestigation mechanism list ("retrospective reviews"). Most of the departments were positive in seeking appropriate measures to optimise their administrative work, showing the mechanism was being effectively implemented.

In 2022, the CCAC received 1,274 inquiries and 678 complaints or reports. Among the complaints or reports, 103 were filed for investigation and transferred to the Anti-Corruption Bureau for follow-up, including 11 joint investigation cases. A total of 171 cases were referred to the Directorate of Ombudsman Services for follow-up, 169 of which were designated as special investigations, with two were carried out in the form of comprehensive investigations. A total of 322 cases were sent to the Complaint Management Centre because they were not eligible for initiating an investigation, with 193 of these cases archived directly and 129 cases archived after being handled by relevant departments for follow-up work.

Together with the cases carried forward from 2021, the CCAC finished handling a total of 295 investigation files in 2022. Of all the cases completed by the Anti-Corruption Bureau, ten were transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office and 78 were archived. In 30 of the cases completed by the Directorate of Ombudsman Services, the departments involved accepted comments or promised to take follow-up action. Ten cases were added to the "retrospective reviews" list for reinvestigation.

In 2022, the CCAC opened 11 joint investigation cases in response to requests from overseas counterparts. Together with those carried forward from 2021, there were a total of 20 joint investigation cases in 2022, 13 of which were closed and seven were still being followed up. The CCAC made two requests to overseas counterparts – mainly involving mainland authorities – for assistance in joint investigations.

As regards publicity and education, in line with the goal of "All for Integrity" set out in the Second Five-Year Development Plan, the CCAC constantly carries out various publicity and education activities through various channels and actively implements online promotion programmes. In 2022, a total of 444 seminars, talks and activities were held, reaching 27,124 participants. They mainly targeted public servants; employees of business organisations; young people; tertiary, primary and secondary school students and the general public. The CCAC also introduced a chapter of the "All for Integrity Series" for the general public and public servants, developed new models for cooperation with community groups, improved and expanded the advisory panel on teaching materials on integrity, published "Nothing on the Planet is Trivial" stories on integrity for lower primary students, and launched the "Storytelling by William" project.

In addition, the CCAC repositioned its community office in Taipa to build a base for youth and community integrity education, as well as for multi-media production, to enhance the promotion

of integrity education. As 2022 marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the CCAC, the CCAC designed a logo and organised commemorative activities, including “30 Years of CCAC - CCAC Integrity Education Open Day”, to allow the public to better understand CCAC from a new perspective.

With the Covid-19 pandemic continuing during 2022, the CCAC took part in conferences, seminars, workshops and training courses that were held online. These were organised by, among others, the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (IAACA), the Global Operational Network of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities (Globe Network), the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The CCAC also voted in the elections of the Second Vice President and Asia President of the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI).

In 2022, at the invitation of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China in the Macao Special Administrative Region, the CCAC participated via a video link in the 13th meeting of the working group on the review of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and the 13th meeting of the working group on corruption prevention held in Vienna, Austria.

In 2023, the CCAC will continue working towards the objectives set out in the Second Five-Year Development Plan, and align with the designated objectives, to take forward its work on integrity – including by continuing to fight against corruption and review relevant laws; strengthening monitoring of disciplinary procedures; promoting the “Integrity Management Plan – Innovation and Continuity”; launching the “All for Integrity Series”: Chapter for the Youth; focusing on the revision of the Organic Law of the Commission Against Corruption of the Macao Special Administrative Region, and relevant administrative regulations; and strengthening exchanges with counterparts from other countries and regions, to jointly tackle global anti-corruption challenges and impacts.



In 2022, the Commission of Audit published the audit report titled *Supervision of Financial Support through the Cultural Industry Fund and the Commissioner of Audit's Report 2023*.

From October 2013 to June 2020, the Cultural Industry Fund approved and implemented a total of 316 subsidised projects involving 517,858,773.35 patacas. The audit report titled “Supervision of Financial Support through the Cultural Industry Fund” reviewed the fund’s follow-up supervision of enterprises receiving funding, and reviewed its management mechanism and implementation quality. The audit found that as a result of deficiencies identified in the fund’s mechanism, the fund not only failed to make timely corrections, but allowed regressions to occur. Although those responsible for the fund claimed to have implemented the established mechanisms, but there was no record of any such implementation, it was clear that they had turned a blind eye to many obvious problems and phenomena. Various facts showed that the fund’s management was passive and laissez-faire, which was the main cause of a series of problems. The Commission of Audit believes that to achieve the stated policy objectives with limited public funding, active and good management is required in both the disbursement of subsidies and other areas of work, with particular emphasis on good use of resources and performance.

In accordance with Article 3 of Law No. 11/1999 requiring the fulfilment of auditing supervision over the implementation of the budget of the Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region, the Commission of Audit completed the Commissioner of Audit’s Report 2021. During the Legislative Assembly’s plenary meeting on 3 November, 2022, the Commissioner of Audit explained in detail the main contents of the report and the details of the implementation.

In addition to auditing, the Commission of Audit conducted the following activities in 2022:

From 7 November to 11 November, Mr Ho Veng On, Commissioner of Audit, went to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, as a member of the Chinese delegation attending the 24th Congress of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions. During the meeting, Mr Ho met with the commissioners of audit of many countries and exchanged views on the management and development of the Commission of Audit. Mr Ho participated in various thematic seminars and all activities; and in the group discussions, he joined the group of Portuguese-speaking countries to discuss issues of common interest. The conference adopted a common outcome document, the Rio Declaration, which would propel government audits to new milestones.

As regards training activities, in January, the Commission of Audit and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Audit Research Institute (Zhuhai) of Nanjing Audit University jointly organised their first online training course. They invited Associate Professor Zhu Yi of the Institute to introduce the basic principles of Python and its application in auditing to the staff of the Commission of Audit. About 70 staff members of the Commission of Audit attended the course. Using simple theories and rich examples, the training seminar systematically introduced the basic principles of Python and its applications in auditing, so that the staff could understand the characteristics and applications of big data auditing. The Commission of Audit hopes that through the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Audit Research Institute (Zhuhai), exchanges and education on audit work between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao will be strengthened, thereby promoting the capacity building of audit teams and innovation in audit theories.

Moreover, to keep auditors abreast of the latest developments in these areas and enhance their professional knowledge, in 2022 more than 100 auditors attended online courses in areas such as new financial reporting standards, Macao auditing standards, and corporate governance – so that they could gain a better understanding of the development of new financial reporting standards; the implications of the new Macao Special Administrative Region auditing standards requirements for audit practices; the differences between the two sets of auditing standards in Macao at present; as well as the evolution of corporate governance, plus the basics and the contents of the general corporate governance framework, in order to improve business standards and better fulfil social responsibilities.

As regards enhancing computer-aided auditing, in 2022 relevant personnel of the Commission of Audit held regular online meetings with the Computer Technology Centre of the National Audit Office, to exchange views on the operation and maintenance of the “Auditor Office (Macao version)”;¹ and further updated the system after considerable verification in the hope of achieving greater functionality.

In 2022, the Commission of Audit continued organising training activities for public departments, to promote the audit culture and its positive significance, and introduce the importance of good management of public resources, so that the public sector can use government resources wisely and cherish public funds while providing services.

Judicial Transparency Fostered by the Courts of the MSAR, and Smart Prosecution Developed by Public Prosecutions Office



Numbers of cases admitted by the three-tier court system

2022	Court of Final Appeal	Court of Appeal	Court of First Instance (including the Examining Magistracy)	Administrative Court	Total
Cases admitted	137	963	14,961	73	16,134
Cases concluded	153	1,057	14,338	97	15,645
Cases pending	92	343	12,789	93	13,317

The majority of the cases in the three-tier court system were criminal cases and criminal labour cases, which totalled 5,555 (excluding Examining Magistracy cases). Ranking second was civil and labour cases, which totalled 3,700. There were also 208 administrative cases and 6,671 other cases.

Law promotion and legal consulting services

To strengthen the promotion of the law and foster transparency in the judicial system, starting from 9 October 2013, the Courts of the Macao SAR issues press releases about typical concluded cases and publishes them on the websites of the court and the Government Information Bureau. Various media may republish and report on these cases, which can hopefully promote legal awareness and law abidance in society, while informing the public about the judicial approaches and methods adopted for settling various disputes. As of the end of 2022, an accumulated total of 978 articles had been released, 105 of which were released in 2022.

Summary of consulting services provided by the Base Court in 2022:

2022	Criminal Courts	Civil Courts	Small Claims Courts	Total
Total number of inquiries	1,532	3,562	1,534	6,628
Number of cases	1,584	3,183	1,534	6,301
Number of cases handled directly	1,547	3,077	1,534	6,158
Number of cases transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office	34	77	---	111
Number of cases transferred to other departments	3	29	---	32
Number of telephone inquiries	488	894	---	1,382

Legal assistance and enforcement

Regarding the delivery of judicial writs and assistance in investigations and evidence collection in civil and commercial cases, in 2022 the Court of Final Appeal received 232 judicial writs from mainland China courts, and delivered 61 judicial writs to mainland China courts on behalf of courts in Macao.

In 2022, the Court of Appeal received 22 requests for reviewing and endorsing judgments made by mainland China courts or arbiters; eight judgments endorsed by the Court of Appeal were sent to the Base Court for enforcement.

The Macao SAR Government and the Hong Kong SAR Government signed the Arrangements Concerning Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement of Arbitral Awards between the Macao SAR and the Hong Kong SAR on 7 January 2013, which took effect on 16 December 2013. As at end of 2022, the Court of Appeal had handled five cases on arbitral awards.

The Macao SAR Government and the Hong Kong SAR Government signed the Arrangements for Mutual Service of Judicial Documents in Civil and Commercial Cases between the Macao SAR and the Hong Kong SAR on 5 December 2017, which came into effect on 1 August 2020. As at the end of 2022, The Court of Final Appeal had received 22 judicial writs from Hong Kong courts and delivered 35 judicial writs to Hong Kong courts on behalf of courts in Macao.

Declarations of assets and interests

In 2022, the Court of Final Appeal followed the stipulations in Law No.11/2003, which had been amended according to Law No.1/2013, in receiving individuals for the declaration of assets and interests. It opened 155 individual dossiers, received 2,030 documents for the declaration of assets and interests that involved 1,590 people, and sorted and updated the contents of the individual dossiers according to the law.

According to stipulations in the aforementioned Law No. 11/2003, the Office of the Court of Final Appeal has uploaded Part IV of the disclosure document of assets declaration to the website of the Courts of the Macao SAR, ensuring it is available in the public domain as required by law. In 2022, the disclosure documents (Part IV) of 434 individual dossiers involving 326 people were published online. By the end of 2022, there was an accumulated total of 4,510 disclosure documents, involving 944 people.

Summary of work in 2022 and outlook for the Courts of the MSAR

From mid-June to early August 2022, Macao experienced the most critical pandemic situation since the Covid-19 pandemic began. The three tiers of courts could only maintain limited operations, or even suspend external operations while only approving or handling urgent cases. Although the pandemic had a greater impact on the prosecution activities of the courts, especially the proceedings of the base courts, the three tiers of courts generally continued to operate normally and effectively, and the overall schedule of the base courts was relatively unaffected.

In 2022, apart from performing judicial functions in accordance with the law, the Courts of the

MSAR also implemented the following work:

- Aligning with and following the Government's anti-pandemic measures – In addition to performing judicial functions in accordance with the law, the Courts of the Macao SAR adjusted the operation of the three tiers of courts in response to the Government's anti-pandemic measures. During the periods when the pandemic was severe in Macao, the base courts admitted cases of violation of anti-pandemic regulations in a timely manner, and in accordance with the summary criminal procedures, ruling against the suspects in relevant cases, thus sounding the alarm to society. The Office of the President of the Court of Final Appeal organised a court anti-pandemic support team of more than 90 people to join the Government's livelihood support team, and performed 11 tasks. This was the first time that court officers joined the Government's disaster relief work;
- Promoting the digitisation of justice – On 1 September 2022, the law on electronically submitting litigation documents and paying litigation fees came into effect. This marked the first time Macao introduced electronic means into its litigation system, representing a good start to promoting the digitisation of litigation procedures. The full operation of the two electronic services and the accumulation of practical experience will serve as a reference for the introduction of electronic proceedings in the next stage, thereby further enhancing the digitisation of judicial proceedings in Macao; and
- Establishing a judicial confidentiality system – In 2022, the courts formulated the Guidelines for the Management of Judicial Confidentiality in Courts, based on the Government's guidelines on confidentiality and the specific needs of judicial practice, clarifying the matters that should be kept confidential and the principles for handling confidential matters, developing a set of confidentiality procedures and management measures applicable to judicial litigation in the three tiers of courts, and establishing corresponding systems and mechanisms of supervision, management and accountability, while protecting the public's right to know.

Looking ahead, Macao is experiencing a critical period of opportunities for transformational development, while the implementation of “One country, two systems” has entered a new stage. To ensure stable and long-lasting implementation of the “One country, two systems” principle, it is necessary to take into account the actual social and economic development and reform in the past two decades since Macao's reunification; carefully examine the issues and challenges in the Macao's legal systems – especially the criminal, civil and administrative litigation systems; and boldly innovate by referring to and introducing effective practices in other legal systems that represent the latest development trends.

In terms of civil legal assistance, efforts shall be made to align judicial laws, regulations and systems between Macao and the Guangdong–Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin; establish a comprehensive, efficient, and diverse dispute resolution mechanism that organically connects cross-border commercial trials, arbitration, and mediation; promote the integration of information technology and legal governance; and establish an inter-regional civil legal assistance system with Chinese characteristics that demonstrates the advantages of the “One country, two systems” principle, to provide new support for the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin.

In terms of criminal legal assistance, the legislative work of the Inter-regional Criminal Legal Assistance Law should be relaunched as soon as possible, to fill the important legal gaps since Macao's reunification, so that the judiciary and law enforcement units have a legal standpoint for inter-regional criminal judicial cooperation. Negotiations and consultations on judicial cooperation with mainland China and Hong Kong in criminal matters shall commence as soon as possible, focusing on issues such as the delivery of criminal judicial documents, investigations and evidence obtainment, handover of fugitives, recognition and execution of criminal judgments, and handover of sentenced persons. Inter-regional criminal legal assistance is an indispensable and important system for safeguarding national sovereignty, security, and development interests, combating cross-border crimes, ensuring social stability, and safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of public and private legal persons and the general public, and should not be lacking for a long period.



In 2022, the number of criminal cases initiated by the Public Prosecutions Office was 10,608, 16.57 percent less than the 12,715 cases in 2021, while the number of cases concluded was 11,200, representing a decrease of 15.15 percent. Among these cases, 2,893 resulted in prosecutions after investigations, and 8,047 were archived, representing decreases of 18.94 percent and 14.27 percent, respectively; and 118 cases were reopened due to discovery of new evidence, representing a decrease of 22.37 percent.

The court statistics reveal that the top five types of crimes investigated in 2022 were:

- 2,917 theft, robbery and property damage cases (down 13.34 percent year on year);
- 1,656 fraud and extortion cases (up 5.95 percent year on year);
- 1,260 offences against physical integrity (down 8.50 percent year on year);
- 1,075 illegal immigration and related crimes (down 5.12 percent year on year); and
- 770 crimes related to traffic accidents (down 37.50 percent year on year).

In addition, the Public Prosecutions Office initiated relatively high numbers of investigations

of the following crimes:

- 302 computer crimes (down 69.77 percent year-on-year);
- 299 cases related to infringement of sexual freedom and self-determination (down 8.56 percent year-on-year);
- 216 cases of defamation (up 10.77 percent year-on-year);
- 214 crimes against public authority (down 27.95 percent year-on-year); and
- 203 cases of forgery (down 45.72 percent year-on-year).

As regards civil and labour litigation works, the Civil Labour Division of the Public Prosecutions Office handled 778 civil labour cases, 11.89 percent less than the figure of 883 cases in 2021. Among these cases, the Office investigated 47 maternity or paternity cases, and initiated 114 court actions for minors; and handled 617 proceedings concerning interdiction, disqualification, custody, litigation fees, bankruptcy, mandatory property inventories and settlement of unpaid taxes on behalf of the Finance Services Bureau.

As regards the handling of labour litigation cases, the Public Prosecutions Office aims to first pursue mediation to resolve disputes for civil labour cases, in accordance with the Labour Procedure Code, to protect the rights of the relatively disadvantaged working class to the greatest extent. In 2022, the Public Prosecutions Office was involved in 412 labour litigation cases, about 20.77 percent less than the 520 cases in 2021. These included: 304 newly initiated cases involving labour accidents and occupational diseases, 5.19 percent more than the 289 cases in 2021; mediation in 260 cases, 15 of which were initiated in the absence of reconciliation agreements; 108 newly initiated common labour litigation cases, 53.35 percent less than the 231 cases in 2021, leading to 125 mediation sessions and 14 litigation cases. Regarding the number of workers involved in the cases, during 2022, 385 workers were involved in the mediation procedures conducted by the Public Prosecutions Office, and 45 workers were involved in litigations initiated following failure to achieve mediation.

In 2022, the Office of the Administrative Court at the Public Prosecutions Office received 84 cases, 37.31 percent less than the 134 cases in the previous year. Among these cases, the Public Prosecutions Office participated in six litigation procedures, 48 judicial appeals, 17 litigation cases, six cases involving urgent procedures, six cases of objection against administration of taxation and one case involving other procedures.

In 2022, the Public Prosecutions Office before the Court of Final Appeal and the Court of Appeal, deployed with five judicial officers, participated in proceedings as follows:

- 912 criminal, civil and administrative proceedings in the Court of Appeal, 15.71 percent less than the 1,082 proceedings in 2021, including three cases related to land issues, leading to the Public Prosecutions Office giving 1,066 opinions on cases and replies to appeals.
- 141 cases of the Court of Final Appeal, 13.50 percent less than the 163 cases in 2021, including one case related to land issues, leading to the Public Prosecutions Office giving 91 opinions on cases and replies to appeals.

In 2022, the overall operation of the MSAR Public Prosecutions Office could be summarised as follows:

As a result of the pandemic, compared with the previous year, the number of criminal, civil and administrative cases admitted by the Public Prosecutions Office decreased, but the number of civil and commercial appeal cases involving the Court of Final Appeal increased. Judging by the actual situation, in the face of Macao's industrial structure adjustment, strengthening post-pandemic economic recovery is crucial to safeguarding people's livelihoods and social stability.

In view of the increasing number of employment-related injury cases, to protect the legitimate rights and interests of workers in occupational safety and physical health, it is necessary to enhance labour safety education and strictly enforce labour safety measures.

The number of computer crimes decreased significantly. On the other hand, the number of fraud cases continued rising. It is necessary to pay attention to the changing trend of fraud crimes and take preventive measures and countermeasures to maintain normal social order and safeguard public property.

As cross-border flows of people were reduced due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the numbers of cases related to illegal gambling and drugs decreased. In line with the adjustment of the anti-pandemic policies and the relaxation of border control measures, all functional departments of the MSAR shall work together to strengthen anti-drug enforcement and join hands to protect the health of residents, especially young people, and secure peace for Macao society.

In 2022, the numbers of fraud cases and robberies arising from illegal currency exchange activities decreased, but the number of criminal activities involving "money exchange gangs" gradually rose as the number of inbound tourists began increasing. The authorities need to strengthen relevant prevention and countermeasures to maintain the public order and social stability of Macao and the image of a healthy tourism city.

In response to illegal acts violating anti-pandemic regulations or disrupting anti-pandemic work, the Public Prosecutions Office strengthened countermeasures to provide judicial protection for pandemic prevention and control. The office also worked together with Macao residents to fight the pandemic by actively participating in frontline support work.

The number of domestic violence cases dropped slightly compared to the previous year. Public departments and private social service agencies in Macao shall continue jointly building a safety barrier to prevent domestic violence, in order to maintain family harmony and social stability.

The situation of crimes against minors and minors committing crimes is becoming more complex, especially crimes involving sexual assault. All sectors of society should attach great importance to this issue. In addition to increasing the intensity of combating sexual crimes according to the law, it is necessary to enhance the self-protection ability and law-abiding awareness of young people, pay attention to the growth of minors, and support the development of healthy sexual values among teenagers.

The number of money laundering cases increased compared with the previous year, while the incidence rate was still within a controllable range. The Public Prosecutions Office shall continue maintaining close cooperation with functional departments to jointly maintain the safety and stability

of Macao's financial system.

The number of international and interregional criminal, civil and commercial judicial assistance cases increased slightly compared with the previous year. The Public Prosecutions Office strictly abides by the one-China principle, handles cases in accordance with the Criminal Law on Mutual Assistance and relevant laws, and strives to optimise the procedures for handling international judicial mutual assistance requests, to improve work efficiency.

By drawing on the advanced experience of smart prosecution in mainland China and working closely with the Inspection Technology Information Research Centre of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, the Public Prosecutions Office supports the development of electronic judicial litigation in Macao, strives to promote the information technology infrastructure for smart prosecutions, continuously optimises the information system functions of judiciary operations, administration and convenient public services, and applies technology to improve the quality and efficiency of prosecutions.

The Public Prosecutions Office actively participates in and promotes the development of the legal system of Macao by providing professional advice on legal reform, as requested by the Government or through various means, to support optimising the legal environment and constructing a legal system with Macao characteristics.

Given progress in developing the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Guangdong-Macao Intensive Cooperation Zone in Hengqin, the Public Prosecutions Office suggests expediting the regime for cooperation with mainland China and Hong Kong in mutual legal assistance regarding criminal matters, to enhance the effectiveness of preventing and fighting crimes.

The Public Prosecutions Office shall strengthen the judicial team and operational standards, firmly implement the overall national security concept, enhance the self-awareness of maintaining the stable and long-lasting successful practice of "One country, two systems", safeguard the security and stability of the country and the Macao SAR, and provide legal protection for Macao residents to live and work in a safe and prosperous environment.