

## STH speaks at World Congress forum on High Speed Rail

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The Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, today (December 8) attended the 7th World Congress on High Speed Rail in Beijing. Ms Cheng, together with government representatives and railway operators from the Mainland, Taiwan, and other countries including Japan, USA, Spain and Russia, spoke on "High Speed Rail towards the future".

Ms Cheng stressed that the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) would be one of the most important catalysts for Hong Kong's economic integration with the Mainland, enabling the free flow of people, goods and technology.

The XRL will bring major cities in the Pearl River Delta within a one-hour radius of Hong Kong. The trip from Hong Kong to Guangzhou will be reduced to 48 minutes.

"The XRL will also directly tap into the national high speed rail network. There will be through-train services between Hong Kong and 16 major cities. The XRL will serve as a more attractive means versus air travel to cities within a 1,000-kilometre radius of Hong Kong. Within this circle, the city population alone stands at 80 million.

"The XRL will not only open up more consumer choices, it will also offer new lifestyles to Hong Kong people and Mainlanders. The social benefits go beyond where we do our shopping and where we take our holidays," she added.

"As the regional services centre, Hong Kong must sharpen its edge and develop services that will serve the population that has become our catchment with connectivity that is brought about by high speed rail," Ms Cheng stressed.

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