

Congratulatory Messages



Dr. LIAO Sau Tung, Sarah, JP
Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

Global natural resources are in dire shortage due to the continuous growth in population, and the lack of water resources is particularly acute. The recent severe drought, which is rarely seen in the Guangdong province, has rendered the plight even worse, making the proper use of water resources in the Pearl River Delta region of paramount importance. Having been enjoying the stable provision of water supply from Dongjiang for a long time, Hong Kong is obliged to convey our heartfelt gratitude to the goodwill of the Guangdong province. However, having regard to the imminent shortage of water resources, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government should hasten its implementation of the programmes on the utilization of water resources, water conservation, and development of new water sources. With such programmes, Hong Kong can then achieve its objective as one of the cities that provide water in a sustainable manner in future, and thereby helps the development of the entire Pearl River Delta region and the Guangdong province in the long run.

Today, on this occasion of the 40th anniversary of Dongjiang water being supplied to Hong Kong and the celebration of the United Nations' World Water Day, let us live up to the publicity slogan "Save water for the future. Every drop counts", and make effort to protect our water resources.

Dr. LIAO Sau Tung, Sarah, JP
Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works



Y.C. LO, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Works)

Today is the 40th Anniversary of Dongjiang water being supplied to Hong Kong in conjunction with the United Nations' World Water Day. It is really a great moment that deserves our commemoration.

In retrospect, the Dongjiang water has been supplied to Hong Kong by the Guangdong authorities for four decades and has helped address our local problem of water resources ever since. Over the period, the Hong Kong government has also endeavoured to enhance its services in water supply. Recent initiatives include the implementation of the rehabilitation and replacement programme of ageing water mains and the various pilot studies on the recycling of sewage effluent and desalination. Apart from this, the general public also pitches in with the government by conserving water and making contributions to the sustainable development on water provision.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to the Guangdong authorities and the motherland for their continuous support to Hong Kong over the years. I also hope that under the principle of "One Country, Two Systems", Guangdong and Hong Kong will forge even closer ties and co-operation in future.

Yiu Ching LO, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Works)



William KO, JP
Chairman of the IWA Regional Committee of Hong Kong

The fact that global water resources are developing from the shortage in quantity to the deterioration of quality is one of the pressing contemporary issues that the world has to face up to. Not only is the issue critical to the quality of life of human beings, but it also affects our health or even survival. Nowadays, water scientists and experts around the world are striving to explore ways to optimize the use of water resources, to control the discharge of pollutants, and to enhance the wastewater treatment and recycling techniques.

Water is our lifeblood. Four decades ago, under the special care and arrangements of our motherland, Dongjiang water started coming through the mountains to Hong Kong, and helped resolve the long standing local water shortage problem. Since then, Hong Kong has been growing up robustly and rising to become one of the four little dragons in Asia.

Coincidentally, today is the United Nations' World Water Day. For this cause, we must keep on enhancing our awareness of the water shortage crisis. While enjoying the fruits of our predecessors' effort in bringing Dongjiang water to Hong Kong, we should also jointly treasure, conserve and protect our valuable water resources.

William C.G. KO, JP
Chairman of the IWA Regional Committee of Hong Kong

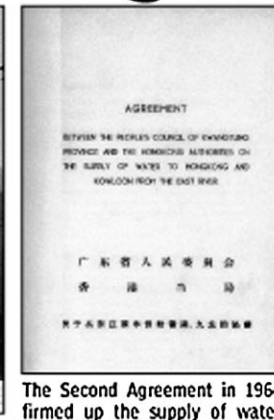
40 Years of Water Supply from Dongjiang



A statue in the podium of Dongshen Water Supply Improvement Works Exhibition Centre



The signing ceremony of the Agreement on Dongshen-Hong Kong water supply between the Deputy Director of Public Works, also the Director of Water Supplies, T.O. Morgan, and the Director of the Guangdong Province Water Conservancy and Hydro electric Bureau, Liu Chao Lun on 22 April 1964. Photo courtesy of Sil-Metrople Organisation Limited



The Second Agreement in 1964 firming up the supply of water from the Dongjiang river system which was some 80 km from the Hong Kong borders.



Dr. Sarah Liao officiated at the commissioning ceremony of the Dongshen Water Supply Improvement Works

Ever since Hong Kong became a trading port some 160 years ago, local water resources have never been able to meet the demand. With the rapid increase in population after the Second World War (WWII), the demand of water for industrial uses grew significantly together with the economy. As a result, water restrictions had been routines since late 1940s. Only until 1 March 1965, the resource conditions were greatly improved as Dongjiang water (water from the East River) started to run to Hong Kong against numerous topographical barriers.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of "Importation of Dongjiang water to Hong Kong". With the overwhelming quest for protecting water resources and scrupulous use of water all over the world, and under the prevailing severe droughts in Guangdong, this is an opportune time for the grown-ups to revisit the history of the Dongjiang water supply and the youngsters to appreciate the efforts of their predecessors. They will then realize that developing and protecting water resources are really daunting tasks. This will have a positive impact on rolling out the Total Water Management programme in Hong Kong.

Shortly after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Guangdong Provincial Government devoted a lot of effort to the provision of hydro conservancy facilities. The largest reservoir in the Guangdong Province and the Dongjiang catchment - the 13.9 billion cubic metre Xinfengjiang Reservoir - was completed in 1958. By the end of 1959, construction of the Shenzhen Reservoir, which was for flood attenuation and hydro power generation, had started. The reservoir dam was completed in March 1960. At the completion ceremony held on 5 March, the then Provincial Party Secretary General Tao Zhu (陶铸), when addressing a group of guests including representatives from Hong Kong, expressed that water could be drawn from Shenzhen Reservoir to Hong Kong if there was such a need. After coming back to Hong Kong, the local celebrities relayed this sincere offer from the Guangdong authorities to the Hong Kong

government, hoping to resolve the water supply shortage problems at the time. After some discussions, the first agreement for importing Guangdong water to Hong Kong was reached by the end of 1960. Water was to be supplied from Shenzhen Reservoir at an annual quantity of about 5 billion gallons (or about 22.3 million cubic metres) and at a price of RMB 0.1 (equivalent to HK\$0.234 at that time) per 1,000 gallons (or 4.5 cubic metres). Both sides would install equipment to facilitate better communication. As regards supply infrastructures, Hong Kong had to complete the distribution network within its territories. The agreement was executed in Shenzhen on 15 November 1960. Shenzhen Reservoir started to supply Hong Kong with raw water on 1 February 1961.

This agreement could not resolve altogether the water supply problems, which were aggravated by the ever-increasing demand brought about by the burgeoning economy. After the typhoon in September 1962 and until the onset of the wet season in April and May in the ensuing year, there was hardly any appreciable rain. Water restrictions were becoming more acute after April 1963. People of Hong Kong had to look for water sources on their own to meet their daily needs whereas the commercial sectors were even more proactive in looking for ways to overcome water shortage. On 23 May 1963 when the Waterworks Office announced that water would only be supplied for 4 hours in every 4 days from 1 June onwards, the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce (CGCC) and the Hong Kong-Kowloon Federation of Trade Unions (now the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions) respectively sent telegrams on 24 May and 25 May to the Governor of Guangdong Province, Chen Yu (陳郁), stating Hong Kong's dire situation under the drought and requesting assistance. In the 25 May reply to both parties, Governor Chen promised to try his best again to help resolve the water supply calamities.

Between 1 June to 4 June 1963, the Deputy Director of Public Works E.P.

Wilmot-Morgan, together with an officer from the Marine Department and an engineer from the Waterworks Office went to Guangzhou to discuss free abstraction of fresh water from Zhujiang (Pearl River) by tankers for use in Hong Kong. The first tanker "lanthe" arrived at Huangpu Port on 25 June and returned to Hong Kong on 26 June after charging the hull with fresh water. The water was discharged and pumped into Tai Lam Chung Reservoir. Throughout the drought the Hong Kong Government chartered a fleet of 14 tankers, which shipped about three billion gallons (or about 13.6 million cubic metres) of river water to Hong Kong from June 1963 to April 1964.

To resolve the water supply problems in the long term, Prime Minister Zhou Enlai in 1963 approved the implementation of Phase I of the Dongjiang-Shenzhen Water Supply Scheme (DSWSS). Representatives of the Guangdong Provincial government and Hong Kong government had two discussions and on 22 April 1964, Deputy Director of Public Works T.O. Morgan, representing Hong Kong, and Head of Guangdong Province Conservancy and Hydro-electric Bureau Liu Zhaolun (劉兆倫), signed the supply agreement in Guangzhou. Apart from the official representatives of both sides, others who had contributed to the conclusion of the supply agreement were also present. They included Head of Xinhua News Agency Liang Weilin (梁蔚林) and Deputy Head Liang Shangyuan (梁上苑), President of CGCC Wong Foon Shing (王貫誠) and Vice-President Ko Cheuk Hung (高卓雄), President of Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions Chen Yiu Choi (陳耀材), Head of Ta Kung Pao Fei Yimin (費彝民), President of Macau CGCC Ho Yin (何賢) and Ma Man Kei (馬萬祺).

The construction of Phase I of DSWSS started in February 1964, well before the signing of the official agreement, so that the vital underwater works could be completed before the onset of the wet season, thus ensuring subsequent works would not be adversely affected by the rainy weather. In fact, construction works proceeded along with the design

work to save time. The Phase 1 works comprised 6 dams, 8 pumping stations, 3 kilometres (km) of canals and 16 km of artificial channels to deliver Dongjiang water along a 80 km long route, firstly upstream via the the Shima River to the highest point at Yantian Reservoir and then downstream to the Shenzhen Reservoir. The Dongjiang water would further flow through 3 km of steel pipelines for reception by the Muk Wu pumping station at the Hong Kong border. Despite its enormous scale and complexity, the scheme was completed in January 1965, i.e. only about 11 months after the start of construction. The Deputy Governor of Guangdong Province Lin Liming (林李明) officiated at the completion ceremony held on 28 February. The Dongjiang water officially commenced to run to Hong Kong on 1 March 1965, laying a firm foundation for resolving Hong Kong's water shortage problems.

With the continuously increasing water demand in Hong Kong, DSWSS has been extended three times, and can now fully satisfy the present day demand of Hong Kong and Shenzhen. In fact, after the last water restriction in May 1982, water restriction has become a historical term. To date, Dongjiang water accounts for 70% to 80% of the total fresh water supply. To further improve the water quality, the Guangdong Provincial Government started in the early 2000s the construction of a closed aqueduct to replace the Shima River for delivering Dongjiang water direct to Shenzhen Reservoir. This would protect the Dongjiang water, which is of Chinese National Standard Class II surface water quality, from contaminations on the original route. The closed aqueduct does not only supply quality raw water to Hong Kong, it also signifies both the sincere friendliness of the Guangdong people towards the people of Hong Kong, and the closer cooperation of both sides under "One Country Two Systems".

40 years has passed, now 90 years old Ip Yeuk Lam (葉若林), Permanent Honorary President of CGCC, still vividly remembers how CGCC and his friends helped arrange for the importation of

Dongjiang water to Hong Kong. He considers that this task is the most successful achievement in all the years he has had with CGCC. He recalled, "I suggested to our President Ko Cheuk Hung the idea of importation of Dongjiang water by direct piping. The President agreed with the proposal and I immediately discussed with Richard Charles Lee (利銘澤) & C N Chau (周煥年). Subsequently, Ko Cheuk Hung, Tong Ping Tat (湯秉達) Wong Foon Shing and I went to Guangzhou and successfully secured an offer from Provincial Party Secretary General Tao Zhu and Governor of Guangdong Province Chen Yu to supply water to Hong Kong free of charge. After we came back to Hong Kong, Richard Charles Lee reported the matter to the Governor David Trench, who considered that the water should not be free of charge. Tong Ping Tat, Wong Foon Shing and I then went to Guangzhou again advising Tao Zhu of David Trench's view. Tao Zhu suggested a price of RMB 0.1 per 1,000 gallons. Finally, the Hong Kong Governor agreed with the price, and I together with some other Presidents went to Guangzhou for the third time to discuss with Tao Zhu and Chen Yu the detailed means to deliver the Dongjiang water. It was concluded that excavation of open channels should be adopted. Channels for carrying water would be dug from Dongjiang to Shenzhen and a reservoir be built at Shenzhen for storage. Pumps would be procured at Beijing and Shanghai for installation at high levels along the route. With the full support of the Chinese Government, who gave priority to the provision of steel, cement, timber and machinery, the major engineering works were completed in a very short period of about nine months."

The severe drought of 1963-64, with concerted efforts from all parties concerned, has led to the importation of Dongjiang water to Hong Kong, which was one of the corner-stones for the present prosperity. If the drought had occurred between the end of WWII and the founding of the PRC in 1949, the impact would not have been as great as the population was small and the economy had not yet recovered.

Since then, the change in political environment in the mainland has brought about a vast expansion in population, thus opening a huge gap in demand and supply. And if the drought had come several years later, at the commencement of the Cultural Revolution, the politically sensitive cross-border supply issues might not have got off the drawing board and perhaps the whole development history of the Pearl River Delta (PRD) would have been totally different. If water supply problems in Hong Kong had not been resolved by the 1970s, the urbanized development and economic re-structuring in Hong Kong, which provides the impetus for Guangdong's rapid economic

development under the Open Door Policy since 1979, might not have happened. With rapid development in the PRD, the competition for water resources will become more and more intense. As Hong Kong is one of the places that rely heavily on the Dongjiang water resources, we should map out the details of the Total Water Management programme as early as possible and implement the various items in the programme, such as better utilization of resources, water conservation and exploration of new water resources expeditiously. The well being of the water supply in Hong Kong will have significant impact on the long term development of the PRD and the Guangdong Province.

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