

Speech by CS at Belgium's King's Day Reception (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at Belgium's King's Day Reception this evening (November 16):

Consul-General (Consul-General of Belgium to Hong Kong, Ms Michèle Deneffe), ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my honour to join you all here to celebrate the Kingdom of Belgium's King's Day and His Majesty King Philippe, now into the sixth year of his reign.

We are also here to celebrate the strong and longstanding ties between Hong Kong and Belgium. That is evident and reinforced by the recent visits of our Chief Executive and the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development to Brussels, the Belgian capital and seat of the European Union.

Hong Kong and Belgium are close business and trading partners. Hong Kong is home to nearly 70 Belgian companies, from banking and asset management to manufacturing and logistics.

As the Consul-General noted, we are pleased to learn that Belgian environmental technology company Keppel Seghers has won an over \$31 billion contract in co-operation with a Hong Kong firm to design, build and operate our first integrated waste management facility.

I invite more Belgian companies consider to join us in Hong Kong for many good reasons. In the coming years, our Motherland's Belt and Road Initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area will create enormous opportunities for Hong Kong as well as the international companies that partner with Hong Kong. This is certainly true in financial and other professional services, in which Hong Kong is a recognised global leader. Innovation and technology will also offer unprecedented prospects, particularly in the Greater Bay Area.

Indeed, this year's Global Innovation Index 2018 that was published by the World Intellectual Property Organization has ranked Shenzhen-Hong Kong second among science and technology clusters worldwide, behind only Tokyo-Yokohama. Hong Kong and Shenzhen are now building the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park at the Lok Ma Chau Loop near the border between the two places to add further impetus to this regional innovation and technology development and co-operation within the Greater Bay Area.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is committed to promoting Hong Kong as a regional information and technology hub, investing heavily in research and development (R&D) and promoting re-industrialisation. The opportunities are here for Belgium's information and technology

companies, as Keppel Seghers has demonstrated. To encourage the private sector to invest in R&D, the Government has introduced a super tax deduction which provides companies that are based in Hong Kong a tax deduction of up to 300 per cent for qualifying R&D expenditure.

Hong Kong's tax system, of course, is invitingly low and simple, part of what makes Hong Kong one of the world's most desirable business addresses. Indeed, just last month, the World Bank's "Doing Business 2019 Report" ranked Hong Kong fourth globally in the ease of doing business.

Business aside, Hong Kong and Belgium are establishing closer co-operation in arts and culture. Belgian films have been screened here in Hong Kong on a number of occasions this year, and the Hong Kong Arts Centre participated in the Theatre of Liège's International Meeting in Performing Arts and Creative Technologies last month.

I understand that the Consul-General has a background steeped in arts and culture, and I look forward to her thoughts on expanding our creative co-operation in the months and years ahead.

On this happy note, please join me now in a toast to His Majesty King Philippe and the people of Belgium.

[Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices at travel agent](#)

Hong Kong Customs today (November 16) arrested a female salesperson of a travel agent suspected of engaging in unfair trade practices involving bait and switch in the sale of travel services, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information alleging that a travel agent had in the course of sale of travel services invited a customer to purchase an air ticket voucher at a discounted price. When the customer redeemed the voucher, the travel agent refused to provide an air ticket. The customer was allowed to use the voucher only when a more expensive air ticket and hotel package was purchased.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested a 37-year-old woman. The arrested woman has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to procure services at reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any trader who offers a service for purchase at a

specified price but subsequently, with the intention of promoting a different service, refuses to deliver the service within a reasonable time commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TD0 to the Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

[Speech by CS at Inauguration Ceremony of Federation of Hong Kong Ethnic Communities \(English only\) \(with photo/video\)](#)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at the Inauguration Ceremony of the Federation of Hong Kong Ethnic Communities today (November 16):

Mr Vijay Harilela (Co-Founder, Federation of Hong Kong Ethnic Communities), Mr Mohan Chugani (Co-Founder, Federation of Hong Kong Ethnic Communities), Mrs Regina Ip (Member of the Legislative Council), Mr Tam Yiu-chung (Member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress), Consuls-General, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It is my honour to join you all at the Inauguration Ceremony of the Federation of Hong Kong Ethnic Communities.

Hong Kong is a cosmopolitan city with over 260 000 non-Chinese ethnic minorities of diverse backgrounds. The Indian, Pakistani and Nepalese communities have established roots in Hong Kong for more than a century. Generations of ethnic minorities have contributed greatly to the social, economic and cultural development of Hong Kong. However, owing to cultural difference and language barriers, they usually form separate community clusters, among which there is little interaction.

I am delighted to see that the Federation, which is the first of its kind, is formed to unite various ethnic minority communities in Hong Kong and pursue the common goal of contributing positively to the betterment of Hong Kong. I note that the Federation has members from the Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese and Bangladeshi communities and welcomes other ethnic minority communities with open arms.

The current-term Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)

Government is committed to building an inclusive and caring society to bring together people from different backgrounds to live and work here. In view of the increasingly diverse needs of our ethnic minority communities, we have set up a Steering Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs, chaired by myself as the Chief Secretary, to enhance cross-bureau collaboration and will be spending over \$500 million starting from 2019-20 to strengthen support on all fronts for ethnic minorities.

We are committed to providing support services to help ethnic minorities integrate into the community. To facilitate barrier-free access to these services, the HKSAR Government will improve the Administrative Guidelines on Promotion of Racial Equality for application to all government bureaux and departments as well as related public organisations providing services to ethnic minorities.

At present, the Home Affairs Department has commissioned non-government organisations to operate eight support service centres for ethnic minorities which provide a wide range of services, including language classes, integration programmes and counselling services. Over 96 000 people can benefit from these centres each year. Starting from 2019-20, the services of these centres will be further strengthened, particularly those services catering for ethnic minority new arrivals and youths.

One of these centres, the CHEER Centre, provides translation and interpretation services to connect ethnic minorities to public service providers. Additional funding has been earmarked to enhance its existing services for seven ethnic minority languages and introduce new services in Vietnamese.

To encourage interaction and exchange between the ethnic minority and local communities, we will engage all relevant stakeholders such as ethnic minority organisations and district organisations to organise more district-based activities. We wish that these activities can help break the ice between ethnic minority and Chinese residents.

We are also mindful of the needs of some ethnic minorities for support in seeking employment. Some of them may still grapple with challenges such as language barriers and cultural differences when finding jobs.

Over the past years, the Government has implemented various measures to promote employment for the ethnic minorities. The Labour Department (LD) seeks to provide employment support services which cater for the needs of ethnic minority job seekers. Dedicated services such as special counters, resource corners and tailor-made employment briefings are in place at all job centres. Experienced employment officers who are familiar with the local employment market can offer them personalised employment advisory services, such as job search advice and job matching services. Free interpretation services are also provided for job seekers who can neither speak Chinese nor English to facilitate their access to LD's employment services.

In parallel, riding on its employer network spanning different

industries and occupations, LD actively canvasses suitable vacancies for them. It also organises inclusive job fairs targeting at ethnic minority job seekers to enhance their employment opportunities.

The LD has also implemented the Employment Services Ambassador Programme for Ethnic Minorities to encourage trainees of the Youth Employment and Training Programme who are proficient in ethnic minority languages to undergo six-month on-the-job training at job centres, industry-based recruitment centres and job fairs. The Programme aims to help the LD better serve ethnic minority job seekers while enhancing young trainees' work experience and benefiting their job search in the open market. The LD has so far employed 127 young trainees since the launch of the programme.

I must stress that the Government spares no effort in maintaining close connection with the ethnic minority communities and relevant service providers to explore new avenues to explore new opportunities for ethnic minorities. To further capitalise on the community network and experience in serving the ethnic minorities, LD will launch a pilot programme in conjunction with NGOs to provide one-stop employment services for ethnic minority job seekers through a case management approach to help remove hurdles to their employment and upgrade their skills.

To facilitate our non-Chinese speaking community's access to public services, we have published a leaflet on the support measures for ethnic minorities in English, Chinese and six ethnic minority languages.

To build a harmonious and inclusive society, Government's effort alone is not enough. We need the support of the community. We will launch the second phase of the Member Self-recommendation Scheme for Youth next month. I would like to take this opportunity to invite aspiring ethnic minority youths to actively participate in the Scheme and bring your voice into the Government.

On this note, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Federation of Hong Kong Ethnic Communities on its inauguration today. I wish the Federation every success in the years ahead, and every one of you good health, all happiness and every success. Thank you so much.



FS to visit Beijing

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, will visit Beijing from November 19 to 21 to meet with relevant Central Government officials in charge of financial and monetary policies to discuss issues of mutual interest.

While in Beijing, Mr Chan will visit the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Commerce, the People's Bank of China, the State Administration of Taxation and other authorities.

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, and the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Mr Norman Chan, will join parts of the visit.

Mr Chan will return to Hong Kong in the afternoon of November 21. During his absence, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, will act as Financial Secretary.

Operating arrangement for shuttle bus services at HZMB Hong Kong Port

The Transport Department (TD) said today (November 16) that an online group tickets pre-booking arrangement for shuttle bus services on the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge will be provided.

The TD added that the operator is preparing and testing the online group tickets pre-booking system in full swing with an aim of starting the arrangement next Friday (November 23). Tour agencies and group organisers will be able to buy shuttle bus tickets for specific dates and time slots from the following day (November 24) through the online pre-booking system. They will also be able to buy round-trip tickets at the same time. The operator will announce the details of the online group tickets pre-booking services next week.

The TD said that at present more than 60 per cent of passengers using shuttle bus services for inbound and outbound trips via the Hong Kong Port are group tourists. It is expected that the pre-booking services can effectively manage and adjust the passenger flows of various time slots. The system can also prevent tour groups from departing from or arriving at the Hong Kong Port at the same time and shorten the waiting time for passengers to board.

The TD appealed to tour agencies and group organisers to better plan their journeys by pre-booking the shuttle bus services. Group tourists who have not pre-booked the shuttle bus services will be required to queue up for boarding after buying the tickets on-site.

At present, the shuttle bus operator has deployed 138 buses of its permanent fleet and will continue to hire more than 30 additional buses from the cross-boundary coach trade during the weekends to deal with possible cross-boundary passenger surges. Moreover, crowd control measures, including separate queuing lines for individual and group tourists leaving for Zhuhai, will also be implemented during the departure peak hours in the evening in order to improve the queuing order and efficiency of boarding.

The TD's Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre will continue to closely monitor the traffic conditions round the clock and implement necessary contingency measures.