Booming panda economy: strengthening Sichuan-Hong Kong collaboration – Director-General of InvestHK visits Sichuan to promote global supply chain opportunities and leveraging Hong Kong as gateway to international markets (with photos)

The Director-General of Investment Promotion at Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK), Ms Alpha Lau, has embarked on her first official visit to Chengdu, Sichuan Province, from March 10 to 12. During the visit, she promoted Hong Kong's new business opportunities to local government authorities, enterprises, and media, and the complementary advantages between Sichuan and Hong Kong in industrial and innovation chains for upgraded development.

The third session of the 14th NPC and the third session of the 14th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference National Committee have provided clear direction on how Hong Kong can continue to leverage its unique advantages and drive ongoing reform and innovation. Hong Kong can play a greater role in three key areas: deepening international collaboration, further enhancing integration within the Greater Bay Area, and fully embracing technological innovation as a key driver of high-quality economic development.

Ms Lau met with Deputy Director General of the Sichuan Provincial Department of Commerce Mr Liang Yong. They exchanged insights on topics including multinational supply chain management. She stated that 2025 marks the final year of the 14th Five-Year Plan and a critical period for deepening reforms. Ms Lau expressed hope that through this visit and promotion, Sichuan businesses could gain a deeper understanding of Hong Kong's unique advantages under the "one country, two systems" framework. Coupled with its status as an international financial centre and its world-class professional services, Hong Kong serves as a strategic gateway for Mainland enterprises to expand into global markets, as well as an ideal entry point for overseas businesses looking to enter the Mainland market.

Ms Lau attended and delivered welcome remarks at a seminar today (March 11) entitled "Sichuan Enterprises Going Global: Leveraging Hong Kong's Advantages for International Supply Chain Collaboration", which was jointly organised by InvestHK, the Sichuan Provincial Department of Commerce, and the Commercial Office of the Economic Affairs Department of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government (LOCPG) in the Hong Kong Special

Administrative Region (HKSAR). The event was also supported and co-organised by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Chengdu (CDETO), the Sichuan Federation of Industry and Commerce, and the Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce in Sichuan. Mr Liang and Second-level Inspector from the Commercial Office of the Economic Affairs Department of the LOCPG in the HKSAR Mr Yan Yongqing gave remarks. The Director of the CDETO, Mr Enoch Yuen, was also in attendance.

Ms Lau said, "Hong Kong has always served as a bridge connecting Sichuan with global markets. Sichuan and Hong Kong complement each other in industrial resources. Hong Kong is not only the largest source of foreign investment in Sichuan Province but also a primary destination for Sichuan enterprises' outbound investments. Recently, driven by the booming 'panda economy' and the popularity of the film 'Ne Zha', Sichuan and Hong Kong have maintained close ties in tourism, culinary consumption, and cultural entertainment. Especially as Sichuan is developing into an innovation-driven economy, it could capitalise on Hong Kong's emphasis on the innovation and technology sector and the vigorous advancement of new quality productive forces. It is believed that Hong Kong's diverse new business opportunities can effectively empower Sichuan enterprises in their internationalisation and help them expand globally through Hong Kong." She also took the opportunity to meet with local media and elaborate on business advantages of Hong Kong.â€¨

Mr Yan said, "The Central Government fully supports Hong Kong in seizing the historical opportunities brought by national development, proactively aligning with national strategies such as the 14th Five-Year Plan, the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and the high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative. By integrating and deeply connecting the industrial, information, supply, and service chains of Sichuan and Hong Kong, there is great potential for collaboration in building competitive industrial clusters and developing an innovation-driven economy. As the representative office of the Ministry of Commerce in Hong Kong, responsible for economic and trade co-operation between the two regions, the Commercial Office of the Economic Affairs Department of the LOCPG in the HKSAR is committed to providing support and services for all Mainland enterprises to invest in Hong Kong and expand to overseas markets via the city."

Mr Liang, who is representing the provincial government authority, expressed that they will actively promote and continuously deepen the "dual-circle interaction" and "two-way empowerment" between Sichuan and Hong Kong, as well as between the western region and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. By strengthening complementary advantages and fully leveraging Hong Kong's role as a "super-connector", it is aimed to help enterprises expand overseas and establish a global presence, driving greater value creation.

The Head of Transport & Logistics and Industrials at InvestHK, Mr Benjamin Wong, delivered a keynote presentation on Hong Kong's business advantages, encouraging Sichuan enterprises to establish their global supply chain management centres in Hong Kong. He also introduced the services that InvestHK provides to assist Mainland enterprises.

The Managing Director of Li & Fung Development (China) Ltd, Mr Chang Ka-mun, shared his experiences as a leading enterprise in multinational supply chain management on the topic of how Hong Kong serves as a hub for multinational management centre and trade financing for Mainland enterprises to guests at the event.

To provide detailed explanations to Sichuan enterprises about Hong Kong's professional service advantages and the talent schemes offered by the HKSAR Government, the event invited Regional Leader of Central and Western China, Global Trade Solutions for HSBC Bank (China), Ms Renee Wong; Partner, Tax of KPMG Advisory (China), Mr Aaron Li; and Chief Immigration Officer from the CDETO, Mr Vincent Yee, to share their insights with guests.

In the last part of the seminar, the Head of Business and Talent Attraction/Investment Promotion of the CDETO, Mr Gan Shanli, hosted a panel discussion that focused on how Sichuan enterprises can fully utilise Hong Kong's platform to grab new business opportunities. This seminar attracted around 150 representatives from local enterprises, institutions, and media in Sichuan Province.

During the three-day visit, Ms Lau will visit a number of leading enterprises from high-tech sectors, such as green energy, advanced manufacturing, and low-altitude economy, to understand and explore their plans in establishing or expanding operations in Hong Kong.